USA $12.99 EUROPE €11.99 UK £8.99 2017#3 WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

NEW IN CHESS

READ BY CLUB PLAYERS IN 116 COUNTRIES

Parimarjan Negi on time-trouble

Judit Polgar How to trap a queen

Ding Liren wins in Shenzhen

An **opening surprise** in the Alekhine

Nigel Short Could Wayne Rooney be a GM?

Hans Ree on Raymond Smullyan

Check out **Ian Nepomniachtchi**

Star analysis

MVL
Anish Giri
Levon Aronian
Vishy Anand
Vladimir Kramnik
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Alexander Morozevich

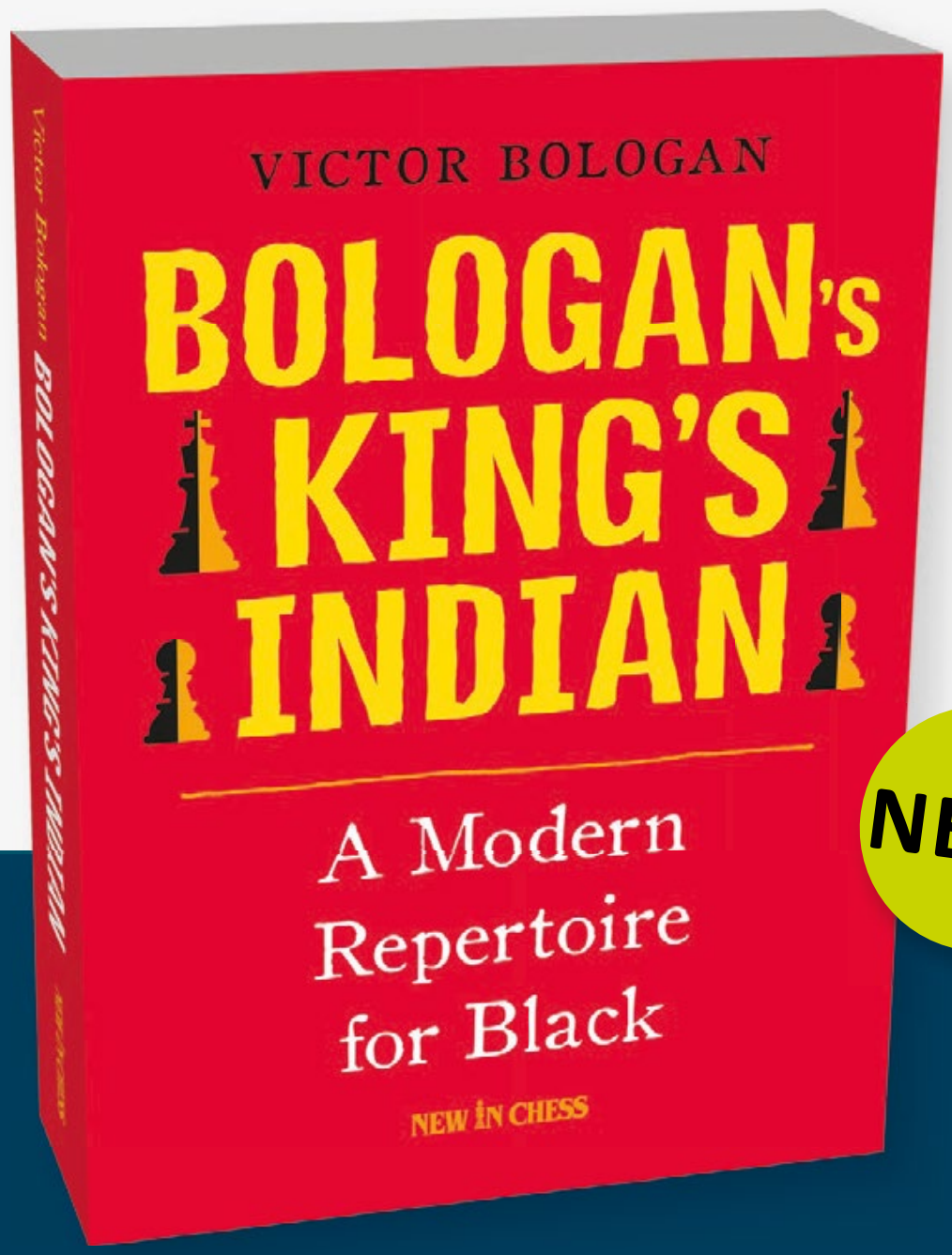
Alexander Grischuk collects precious points in Sharjah Grand Prix

ISBN 978-90-5691-731-9

JOOP VAN OOSTEROM (1937-2016)

THE GREATEST CHESS MAECENAS OF ALL TIME (50 MILLION!)

With lots of new ideas and resources



NEW!

Victor Bologan presents a complete King's Indian repertoire for Black. His explanations are accessible for a wide range of players and he provides a thorough grounding in the strategic and tactical motifs. White players can benefit from this book as well, since Bologan looks at all the lines from both sides. In many lines he presents TWO options to handle the Black position.

During his research, Bologan has found many new ideas and resources. He has also included several offbeat sidelines that will enable you to surprise your opponent.

paperback | 448 pages | €29.95 | available at your local (chess)bookseller or at newinchess.com | a NEW IN CHESS publication

Download the New In Chess app:

- get early access to every issue
- follow every move on the built-in board

Read New In Chess on your tablet or smartphone two weeks before the printed edition is available, and replay all the moves in the interactive chess viewer

You can now download the digital edition of New In Chess on your tablet or phone and read all the stories immediately after publication. By simply tapping on the games you can replay the moves on the interactive chessviewer. So from now on you don't need a board and set to fully enjoy what top grandmasters have to say about their games! The New In Chess app installs in seconds, has all the right features and is easy to operate. We have made an entire issue available as a FREE DOWNLOAD on your iPhone, iPad or Android device.

Get it on Google play

The chess magazine that moves

Now available on iPhone, iPad and Android

Watch the video at www.newinchess.com/video

Available on the App Store

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT PREMIUM

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT:

Access the world of ChessBase from wherever you are 24/7!

PLAYCHESS
The ultimate chess experience

LIVE DATABASE
Professional research: 8 million games online

MY GAMES CLOUD
Your one-stop cloud storage area

FRITZ ONLINE
Your browser-based chess engine

VIDEOS
Private Masterclasses

OPENINGS
Welcome to modern opening preparation

TRAINING
Calculate, sacrifice, mate

ENGINE CLOUD
Top engine on the best hardware

LET'S CHECK
Knowledge is mate: 200 million analyses

CB NEWS
The world-renowned chess news portal

CHESSBASE 14

Everyone uses ChessBase, from the World Champion to the amateur next door. Start your personal success story with ChessBase 14 and enjoy your chess even more. Available on DVD-ROM or as download.

From "A" for analysis to "Z" for zugzwang: there are in the new ChessBase 14 program a whole heap of improvements which make the entry and analysis of games all the more easy, as they do the production of training or practice material. The new function "Assisted Analysis" is an outstanding example: as you enter a game, whenever you click on a piece an evaluation is produced for all its possible target squares and this is highlighted on the board in colour. Thus even before you play it you can see whether there is a better move than the one you planned. This not only makes entering moves easy, but it also invites you to participate in subtle and continuous calculation training.

Also new in ChessBase 14 is the access to annotated games in the Live Database. In conjunction with a Premium Account you can even find complete analysis of many topical games from the elite tournaments. And because the Live Database has become more and more important in the search for comparable games, now as you play through a game ChessBase 14 updates the search results automatically on every move.

Other improvements: new game notation with diagrams and coloured highlighting in encapsulated variations, one login for all ChessBase servers (playchess, ChessBase Cloud, Let's Check, ChessBase Accounts), analysis of a whole game with rapid error search, saving of the search mask, export of the diagram list as a Word document produces training material in a jiffy, automatic analysis jobs from correspondence games, simplified production of training questions, the search for similar structures now made interactive, replacing games in big databases considerably speeded up, improved search for doubles, easy use of tool to activate Fritz-Trainer and Engines, and much more.

THE NEW CHESSBASE 14 PROGRAM PACKAGES

STARTER PACKAGE 189,90 €
- ChessBase 14 Program with access to the Live-Database (8 million games)
- Big Database 2017
- CBMagazine subscription for half a year (3 issues)
- Database-Update-Service through end of 2017
- Six months Premium membership for playchess and for the ChessBase Accounts

MEGA PACKAGE 279,90 €
- ChessBase 14 Program with access to the Live-Database (8 million games)
- Mega Database 2017
- CBMagazine subscription for a full year (6 issues)
- Database-Update-Service through end of 2017
- Full year Premium membership for playchess and for the ChessBase Accounts

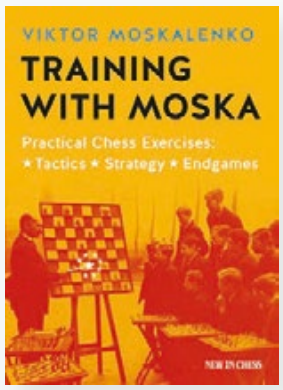
PREMIUM PACKAGE 379,90 €
- ChessBase 14 Program with access to the Live-Database (8 million games)
- Mega Database 2017
- CBMagazine subscription for a full year (6 issues)
- Database-Update-Service through end of 2017
- Full year Premium membership for playchess and for the ChessBase Accounts
- Corr Database 2015
- Endgameturbo 4

UPDATE FROM CHESSBASE 13 TO CHESSBASE 14 99,90 €
- ChessBase 14 Program with access to the Live-Database (8 million games)
- Three months Premium membership for playchess and for the ChessBase Accounts

ChessBase GmbH · News: en.chessbase.com · CB Shop: shop.chessbase.com
CHESSBASE DEALER: NEW IN CHESS · P.O. Box 1093 · NL-1810 KB Alkmaar
phone (+31)72 5127137 · fax (+31)72 5158234 · WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

ChessBase

NEW IN CHESS bestsellers



Training with Moska

Practical Chess Exercises: Tactics, Strategy, Endgames

Viktor Moskalenko 336 pages - €27.95

The best instructive material Moskalenko collected while working with amateurs for three decades. If you have an Elo rating between 1400 and 2100, this book will help you make a big step forward!

"It is always fun to be instructed by Moskalenko, as he has such a fresh and creative approach!" – *GM Karsten Müller*

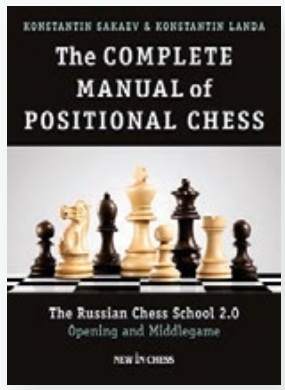
The Complete Manual of Positional Chess

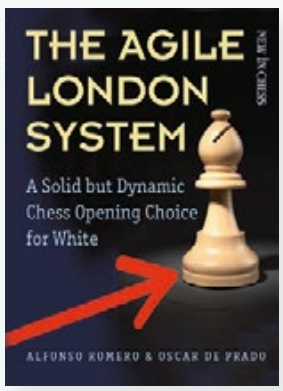
The Russian Chess School 2.0 – Opening and Middlegame

Konstantin Sakaev & Konstantin Landa 320 pages - €27.95

Probably the most thorough grounding in the history of teaching chess. Presents a complete set of instructions for trainers and self-improvers. You are handed basic and advanced tools to improve in the areas that really matter.

"An excellent book, you can't get better than the Russian school of chess." – *GM Daniel King*


KONSTANTIN SAKAEV & KONSTANTIN LANDA
The COMPLETE MANUAL of POSITIONAL CHESS
The Russian Chess School 2.0
Opening and Middlegame



The Agile London System

A Solid but Dynamic Chess Opening Choice for White

Alfonso Romero & Oscar de Prado 336 pages - €26.95

Reveals the secrets behind sharp ideas such as the Barry Attack, the Jobava Attack and the hyper-aggressive Pereyra Attack.

"With plenty of fresh material that should ensure that it will be the reference work on the complete London System for years to come." – *GM Glenn Flear*

Winning with the Slow (but Venomous!) Italian

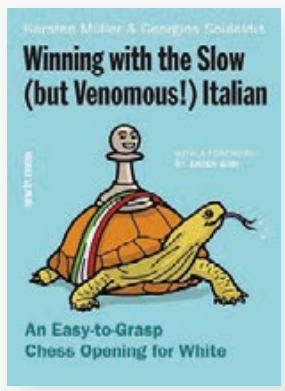
An Easy-to-Grasp Chess Opening for White

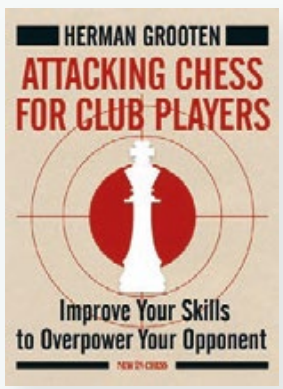
Karsten Müller & Georgios Souleidis 240 pages - €27.95

Looks innocent, but is actually full of venom. Ideal for club players and champions: Magnus plays it, too!

"A brilliant book." – *ChessBase News*

"Contains some highly powerful ideas." *International Master Dirk Schuh*





Attacking Chess for Club Players

Improve Your Skills to Overpower Your Opponents

Herman Grooten 352 pages - €27.95

Third, improved & extended edition

"A really stimulating book with quite original ideas in how to develop the skills that we need when we're attacking. Not only very instructive, but really good fun as well." *GM Daniel King*

"Succeeds and amuses, and is truly suitable for players of all levels." – *IM Frank Zeller, SCHACH Magazine*

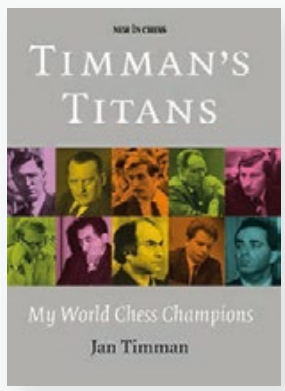
Timman's Titans

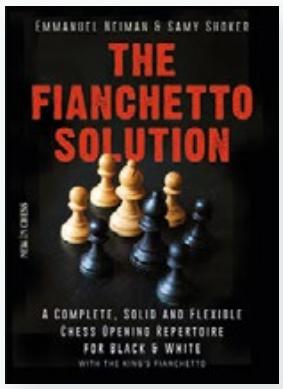
My World Chess Champions

Jan Timman 320 pages - €26.95

"One of the finest chessbooks that have recently been published." *Jeroen Bosch, Schaakmagazine*

"Full of anecdotes I have never seen elsewhere. Entertaining and instructive, 'Timman's Titans' is also Timman's finest." *Sean Marsh, CHESS Magazine (UK)*




EMMANUEL NEIMAN & SAMY SHOKER
THE FIANCHETTO SOLUTION
A COMPLETE, SOLID AND FLEXIBLE CHESS OPENING REPERTOIRE FOR BLACK & WHITE

The Fianchetto Solution

A Complete, Solid and Flexible Chess Opening Repertoire

Emmanuel Neiman & Samy Shoker 272 pages - €22.95

"A good help to obtain a playable repertoire." *German Correspondence Chess Federation*

"The authors are not just presenting theory and new developments. They also explain lots of strategic ideas." *Dirk Schuh, Rochade Europa Magazine*

"An excellent textbook for the majority of us mortals." *B.H.Wilders, Nederlands Dagblad*

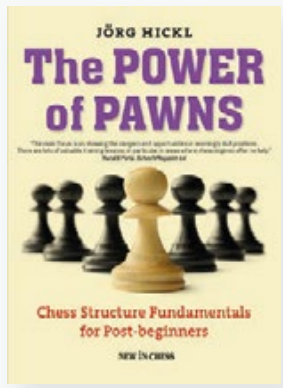
The Power of Pawns

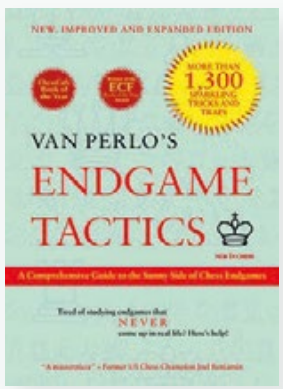
Chess Structures Fundamentals for Post-Beginners

Jörg Hickl 192 pages - €18.95

"The didactic concept of the book is admirable. Each chapter defines the structures, explains the typical characteristics and shows the plans for both White and Black. The reader invariably receives useful tips for practical play." *Harry Schaack, KARL magazine*

"There are lots of valuable training lessons, in particular in areas where chess engines offer no help." *Harald Fietz, SchachMagazin 64*





Endgame Tactics - Improved & Expanded Ed.

A Comprehensive Guide to the Sunny Side of Chess Endgames

Ger van Perlo 608 pages - €29.95

Endgames are, contrary to what you might think if you open an endgame theory book, big fun! Enjoy the entertainment of everyday practice in this double prize winner: ECF Book of the Year AND ChessCafe Book of the Year!

This edition is 25% bigger than the original, and contains 1,300 endgame tricks and traps.

Black is Back!

What's White's Advantage Anyway?

Andras Adorjan 288 pages - €22.95

"A book that makes you think. Adorjan's arguments are convincing: White's opening advantage isn't self-evident." *Mark Haast, Schaaksite.nl*

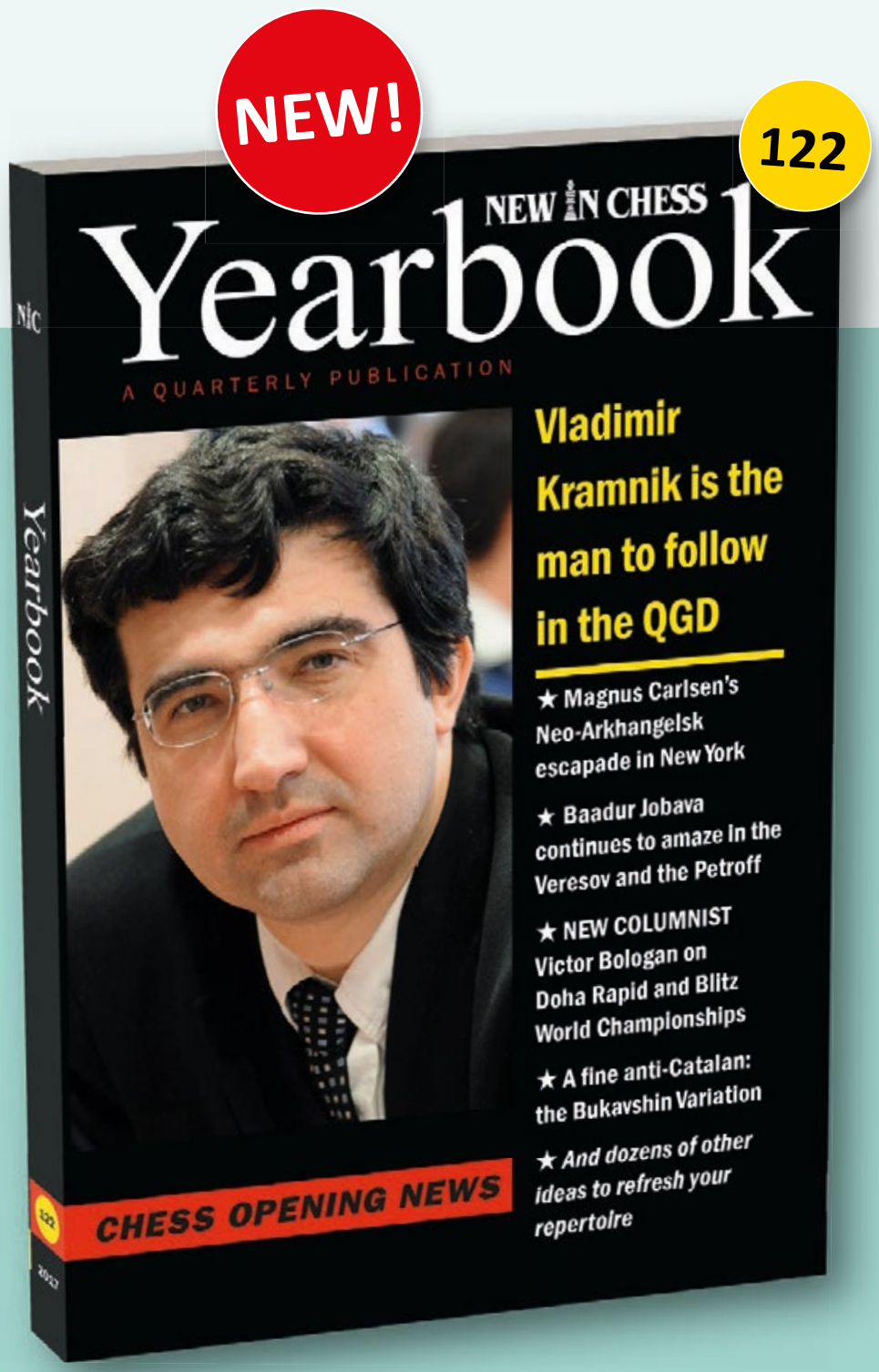
"Quirky, eccentric, different. Never dull." *Sean Marsh, CHESS Magazine*

"A warning for those who think they can smoothly win with White." – *Richard Vedder, Schaaknieuws*

available at your local (chess)bookseller or at www.newinchess.com

“There is something about nearly every opening one can think of.”

– British Chess Magazine


NEW!
122
NEW IN CHESS
Yearbook
A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
Vladimir Kramnik is the man to follow in the QGD
★ Magnus Carlsen's Neo-Arkhangelsk escapade in New York
★ Baadur Jobava continues to amaze in the Veresov and the Petroff
★ NEW COLUMNIST Victor Bologan on Doha Rapid and Blitz World Championships
★ A fine anti-Catalan: the Bukavshin Variation
★ And dozens of other ideas to refresh your repertoire
CHESS OPENING NEWS

Paperback | 256 pages | € 29.95
available at your local (chess)bookseller
or at newinchess.com

★ *New layout for even better accessibility*

★ *New columnist: Victor Bologan*

★ *Lots of instructional exercises*

With answers to urgent questions such as:

- **Who played the Novelty of the Year 2016? And who invented it?**
- **How did Olympiad top scorer Andrei Volokitin set fire to the solid Fianchetto Grünfeld with black?**
- **How serious is Baadur Jobava’s early pawn sacrifice 3...d5 in the Petroff?**
- **What are the advantages for Black of postponing the d-pawn push against White’s d4, c4 with a fianchetto?**
- **Can White pose Black problems with an early ♗d2 in the Rubinstein Nimzo?**
- **How does Kramnik win with black in solid QGD’s?**
- **Is Fabiano Caruana’s pet antidote to the Arbakov Attack in crisis?**
- **With which Richter-Veresov line did Baadur Jobava outplay some strong opponents at the Baku Olympiad?**
- **How can White play for a pleasant edge in the Réti Slav?**
- **Was Magnus Carlsen wise to play the Neo-Arkhangelsk in the World Championship match?**
- **What is Bartel’s deadly recipe against the Najdorf?**
- **Is Black comfortable in the Rossolimo with 8...f5 ?**
- **With which stunning idea in the Panov Caro-Kann did Alexander Grischuk surprise Vidit Gujrathi?**
- **How did Viswanathan Anand neutralize Wesley So in the trendy 4...♘bd7 QGD?**
- **With which amazing concept did Yakovenko improve on Nakamura’s play in the Open Catalan?**
- **With which clever anti-Slav move Ivanchuk beat Magnus to win the World rapid title?**

2017#3
NEW IN CHESS

3

Contents

'Tomorrow's game is always the most exciting.'

8 More than Black and White

10 NIC's Café

13 Your Move

14 Infographic

15 Fair & Square

16 Sharing a lifelong passion
Our game has always depended on the generosity of benefactors, but it is safe to say that no one ever supported chess as lavishly as he did. Monaco-based Joop van Oosterom was a Maecenas extraordinaire, spending an estimated 50 million euros on his beloved game.

36 A Grand Prix lacking speed
'Gens circumspecta sumus' seemed to be the motto of the GP in Sharjah, the first of a cycle of four tournaments that will decide on two coveted spots in the 2018 Candidates' tournament.

40 Celeb 64: Viola Davis

53 Maximize Your Tactics

54 An aleatory career
Most of all, chess careers are determined by sheer chance, Nigel Short argues.

56 Time-trouble
Parimarjan Negi tells you when it's your enemy. Or your friend.

60 Another Chinese champion
Tan Zhongyi knocked out the top seeds to become Women's World Champion.

70 Queen trapping
Judit Polgar took a leaf out of Anatoly Karpov's book.

74 S.O.S.: Let those knights tango!

78 Shenzhen enters chess scene
China's number one Ding Liren prevailed in the Longgang Masters.

88 The joy of craziness
Hans Ree remembers the American philosopher and retrograde lover Raymond Smullyan.

90 Profile: Vladimir Fedoseev

98 Sadler on Books

102 Jan Timman's column

106 Just Checking
How many friends do you think Ian Nepomniachtchi has on Facebook?

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE
Erwin l'Ami, Vishy Anand, Levon Aronian, Vladimir Barsky, Jeroen Bosch, Vladimir Fedoseev, Anish Giri, Alexander Grischuk, John Henderson, Vladimir Kramnik, Shakhriyar Mamedyarov, Dylan McClain, Alexander Morozevich, Parimarjan Negi, Ian Nepomniachtchi, Maxim Notkin, Judit Polgar, Hans Ree, Matthew Sadler, Yu Shaoteng, Nigel Short, Jan Timman, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, Peng Zhaoqin

PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATIONS
Max Avdev, Bas Beekhuizen, Maria Emelianova, Dagobert Kohlmeyer, Eteri Kublashvili, David Llada, Fred Lucas, Berend Vonk

COVER
Alexander Grischuk: Max Avdev

'He took out his phone and turned it into a hotspot. He then proceeded to add me as a contact on WeChat, the Chinese equivalent of WhatsApp, before writing me perfect English messages translated with Baidu Translate, which is the Chinese equivalent of Google Translate. Upon which I would use that same translation app to answer in fluent Chinese!' – *Erwin l'Ami*

SUBSCRIPTIONS: p. 105 COLOPHON: p. 13

More than Black and White

It is often said that our game is relative cheap to play, as, after all, chess sets are not all that expensive, are they? But as any avid chess set collector will tell you, there are chess sets and then again there are 'chess sets' - and this one, currently on sale at the Galerie Kugel in Paris for a 'mere' €3,5 million, firmly belongs to the latter category.

This exquisite chess set was made in Augsburg around 1720 by some of the most eminent silversmiths and craftsmen of the era for Augustus the Strong (1670-1733), Prince-Elector of Saxony and King of Poland.

The case is veneered with tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl, with silver and gilt bronze mounts on oak, fir and fruit tree wood core; the board is a marquetry of natural and stained mother-of-pearl, reddish orange stained horn, ivory, brass, copper and pewter; with the pieces made from a Meissen white porcelain called 'Böttgerporzellan', faience with petit feu decor, cold-painted lead, tortoiseshell, mother-of-pearl, agate, silver and silver-gilt.

So who cares that the 'white' queen's rook is standing on a light square? ■

NIC's Café

Time for Morphy

America's premier watchmaker, RGM Watch Co., have released a new addition to their gallery collection of an exclusive, chess-themed timepiece that honours the great European tour of the late 1850s by Paul Morphy.

When the all-conquering Morphy returned home to America in 1859, he was presented with a specially commissioned pocket watch by the New York Chess Club during a Testimonial Diner. The original watch was made by the American Watch Co., later known as Waltham Watch Co. And Morphy was so taken by the pocket watch that he visited the factory in Waltham, Massachusetts on May 30, 1859, and was given a tour.

The original dial of Morphy's watch and the modern time piece it inspired.

Not much is known about what then happened to Morphy's watch. Today only the original dial – designed by John Webb, Jr., head of Waltham's dial department – survives and can be found on display in the National Watch and Clock Museum in Pennsylvania. Instead of Roman numerals, the unique dial has the hours represented by various chess pieces, finely done in red and black enamel – the Black King standing at twelve, and the Red King at six, the Queens at one and eleven, Bishops at two and ten, Knights at three and nine, Rooks at four and eight, and Pawns at five and seven.

When the dial and its owner's history caught the attention of RGM, the company was inspired to reproduce Morphy's watch in a limited edition, PS-801-CH – Chess in Enamel ('PS' stands for 'Pennsylvania Series' and the 'CH' stands for 'Chess'). The model comes with a glass enamel, grand feu ('grand fire') double sunk dial and fitted with the beating heart of the RGM 801, 19 jewel manual wind movement. There are 25 basic pieces made in stainless steel, each costing $13,900; 5 pieces in 18k rose gold, at $29,900; and for those that like nothing but the very best, 3 pieces in platinum for just a mere $39,900 each.

Cage match

For decades, Marcel Duchamp was busy 'conspicuously playing chess, not visibly doing art.' According to a recent review in the *New York Times*, much the same happens in the intriguing new Off Broadway play written by Jocelyn Clarke, 'Chess Match No. 5,' currently running at the Abingdon Theatre, all about composer John Cage, which quotes that above remark by the composer about the conceptualist.

The central theme onstage revolves around the main characters playing chess in one form or another, just as Cage and Duchamp famously did during a 1968 public game that was turned into a live art performance, which proved to be the last public appearance of Duchamp before his death later that same year.

Cage on stage. Actor Will Bond plays the avant-gardist composer in Chess Match No. 5.

Cage first met Duchamp in New York during the Second World War, but through the 1950s and until the conceptualist's death, he directly influenced the composer. One 1944 mysterious Cage composition that's also mentioned in the play and features musically is 'Chess Pieces', which was only rediscovered and played for the first time in 2005. Cage had been invited to participate in the chess-themed 'The Imagery of Chess' exhibit at the Julian Levy Gallery organized by Max Ernst and Duchamp, and he created a chessboard-sized canvas painting with fragments of musical scores in each of the 64 squares.

The painting went into a private collection, where it remains, almost completely invisible to the outside Cageian world, until 2005, when the Noguchi Museum in New York City recreated that 1944 exhibit, and pianist Margaret Leng Tan was commissioned to transcribe and perform the score in the painting, which premiered alongside the exhibit.

The Scotch gambit

We've seen chess used as a metaphor on numerous occasions in politics in these pages, but Dominic Lawson, a leading Fleet Street columnist (who is also the president of the English Chess Federation), devoted one of his recent *Sunday Times* columns to Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who is considered by her many admirers to be the consummate political chess player.

'If constitutional politics were chess,' one wrote that wrangled Lawson, 'Nicola Sturgeon would be contemplating the endgame. One by one, her opponents' pieces have been captured. Move by move, she seems to edge closer to checkmate, or even the moment when the United Kingdom's grandmasters resign in despair.'

With Lawson's chess credentials, he felt suitably qualified in taking the Scottish first minister to task over

all these chessic comparisons and her latest independence gambit, in a column which covered just about every possible chess metaphor you could ever think of and then some. But what's remarkable was that this turned out to be the second chess-related story on 'Grandmaster Sturgeon' – as Lawson is wont to describe her – in as many weeks to hit the national media.

'Grandmaster Sturgeon' with a royal view of the Lewis chess pieces.

Earlier in March, the first minister hailed the £19.5m 'beautiful restoration' of the Outer Hebridean Lews Castle – that overlooks Stornoway, the main town on the Isle of Lewis – that will house a portion of the world's most iconic chess pieces as the central attraction in a new state-of-the-art museum. Being photographed for the opening alongside the iconic chess pieces, she had a typically Scottish message for children from Uig on the the west of Lewis (where they were found in 1831): 'Keep digging. You might find a few more.'

On your Marx

Next year commemorates the 200th anniversary of the birth of the hugely influential German revolutionary thinker and philosopher Karl Marx, and already the race has started in the early anniversary stakes with the release of the new movie 'The Young Karl Marx', from the acclaimed Haitian film-maker Raoul Peck, that premiered in late February during the 67th Berlin Film Festival.

The movie is more art-house than big-budget box-office catnip, and focuses in on the budding early friendship formed by Marx with his lifelong collaborator, Friedrich Engels, that paved the way for the pair of revolutionaries to co-author the pamphlet 'The Communist Manifesto'.

The reason we bring it to your attention is that, for this key moment in the movie, as the intelligent communist bromance between the two blossoms during their first meetings in a Paris café in 1844, the director presents them engrossed in a complex game of chess. The scene is atmospherically filmed, using natural light, and is full of talk of strategy, tactics and machinating manoeuvres – and all played out on the silver screen over a beautiful, scene-stealing period-piece chess set.

Marx was indeed a noted chess aficionado, and the new movie plays on this. According to biographer Francis Wheen, in 1867 Marx even whiled away an evening at a party

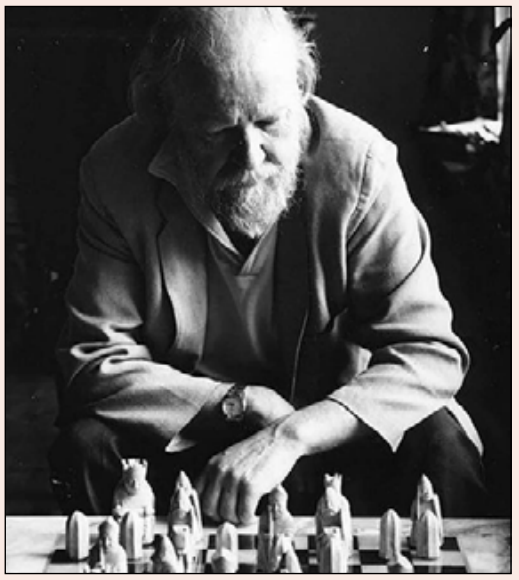
More chess and politics. Friedrich Engels (Stefan Konarske) and Karl Marx (August Diehl) play a game in 'a Paris café'.

hosted in the London home of chess master Gustav Neumann as he waited for the first proofs of his weighty tome *Das Kapital* to be returned.

Lord of the open files

It's not unusual for a literary editor for a major newspaper to be in regular correspondence with a Nobel laureate writer. It's also perhaps not unusual for those letters to be donated to a university archive – but what is unusual, is when those letters turn out to be a long series of correspondence chess games!

Sir Anthony Curtis was the first literary editor for *The Sunday Telegraph*, and he enjoyed playing chess by post with some of Britain's leading



A little shocked by the news of the Nobel Prize for literature, William Golding blundered into a knight fork.

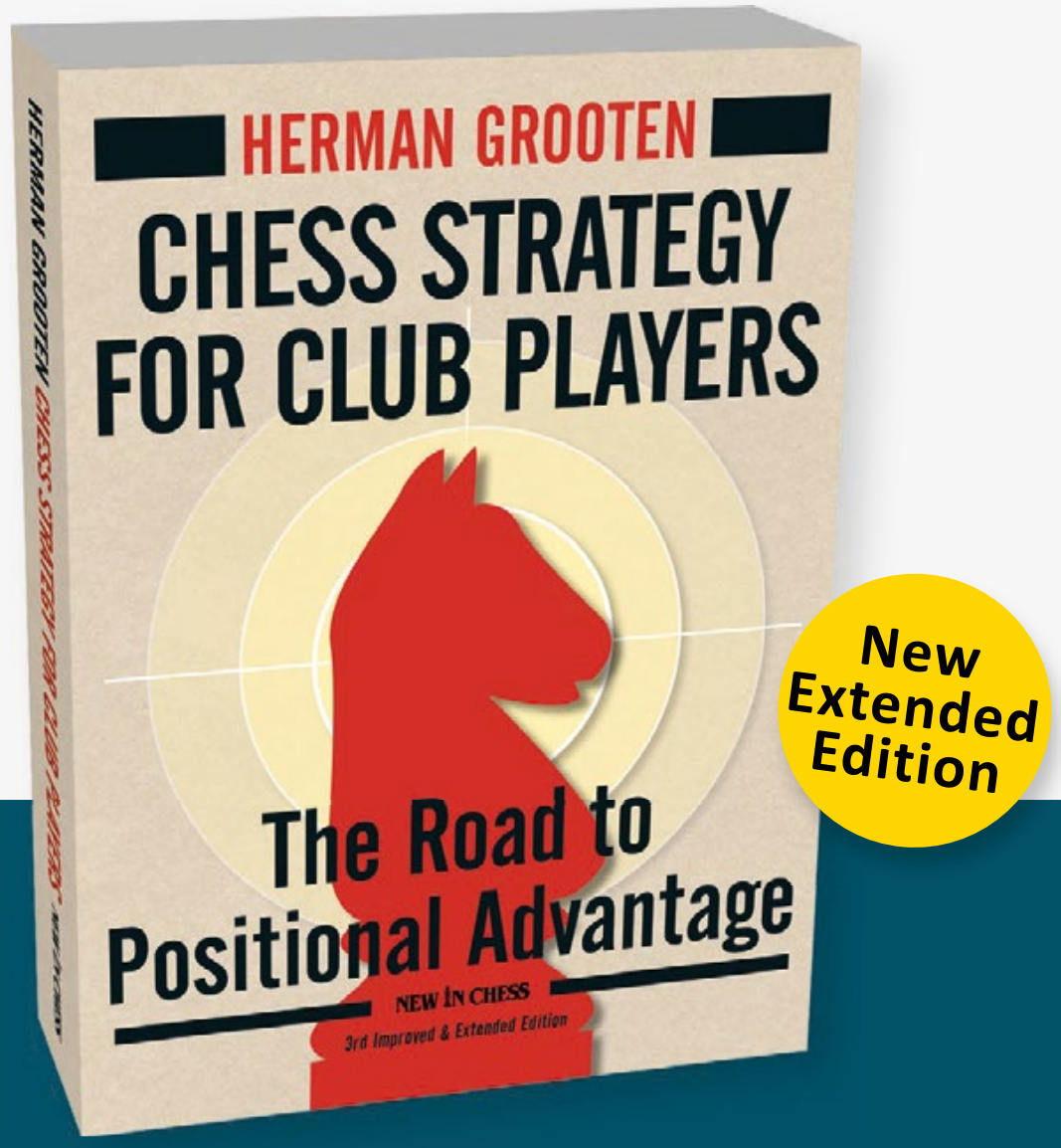
writers and poets. Among his literary chess circle was Sir William Golding, famous for his dystopian novel *Lord of the Flies* – and now the chess correspondence between the two has recently been acquired by the Golding archive at the University of Exeter.

Their games and personal notes to each other spanning the years 1980-1993 show a fascinating insight into an author's personal life during a period when he was garnering a reputation as being one of the greatest writers of his generation. But Golding jokes not about writing another great novel, but about a book on his 'hundred most humiliating games.'

In another exchange, Curtis – who won most of their encounters – wryly noted that it was a blow to the confidence 'when your opponent wins the Nobel Prize in the middle of a game.' Famously, Golding received a chess move from Curtis in the same post as news of his Nobel Prize and, a little shocked by the unexpected announcement, subsequently blundered into a knight fork. ■

“If you want to be a better player, you owe it to yourself to pick up a copy’

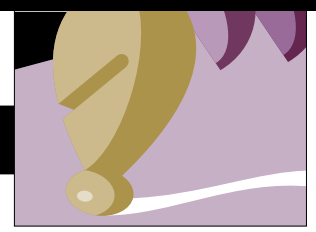
– Jeremy Silman, US Chess Online



The new (3rd) edition of this modern classic has, besides various corrections and improvements, a new introduction and a brand-new chapter called ‘Total Control’. In this 35-page chapter IM Herman Grooten adds the final instructive brick to his formidable, yet very accessible, building: inspired by Tigran Petrosian’s playing style he explains amateurs how to exploit small advantages. And he provides a new set of exercises.

This book is not just a collection of middlegame positions, but a complete course that is well-structured, has great examples and exercises, is entertaining and extremely effective. Grooten’s bestseller was shortlisted for **The Guardian Chess Book of the Year** and awarded **ChessCafe Book of the Year**.

paperback • 464 pages • €27.95 • available at your local (chess)bookseller or at newinchess.com • a NEW IN CHESS publication



The longest streak (1)

I would like to react to the 'Infographic' in New In Chess 2017/2, page 14. From June 5, 2006 until March 3, 2007, I played 110 games without defeat: from my loss to GM Chatalbashev in the 2006 Neuchatel Open, to my loss against the late GM Vugar Gashimov in Cappelle-la-Grande 2007. This game was incredible – I lost with Black in 25 moves without making any major mistake!

In this period I had a huge amount of draws (66) and improved my Elo only from 2480 to 2519. Also, not all games were rated. To my mind GM Sergey Tiviakov holds the record with 110 games without a loss in the period 2004-2005. His opponents were stronger, so he should be first on the list.

By the way, I had another unbeaten run of 101 games in 2008. And I also found that GM Ulf Andersson had a run of 100 games without a loss.

Bogdan Lalic
Sutton, UK

The longest streak (2)

To my great surprise I saw the 'Infographic' in New In Chess 2017/2 about the longest streaks without defeat in chess history. Somehow my name has been forgotten.

It is a well-known fact that I am the official world record holder, as I played 110 tournament games without a defeat in the period 2004-2005. That streak lasted for 11 months. In that period I played a lot against world top players like Aronian, Radjabov, Ivanchuk and Carlsen (just to name a few). I attach a game file as a confirmation of my record!

In that period I only lost two rapid games, to V. Ivanchuk on December 18, 2014, but rapid games don't count for such streaks.

Although I was educated in the chess school of World Champion V. Smyslov, my favourite World Champion was T. Petrosian, whose games I studied many times. And since T. Petrosian was a master of prophylactic play, I managed to learn a lot from him and raised my play to an almost perfect level, with few losses.

I consider this achievement to become the world record holder as not less important than my qualification for the Candidates matches for the World Championship in 1993/1994.

As I had already had long periods without losses (50-60 games many times), it was not difficult for me to play from a psychological point of view. Only after crossing the mark of 100 games without a loss, it became difficult to sleep since I started to believe in my invincibility ☺.

The scariest moment in that period was my game against Dreev in 2005 where I had a totally lost position.

Sergey Tiviakov
Groningen, The Netherlands

Write to us

New In Chess, P.O. Box 1093
1810 KB Alkmaar, The Netherlands
or e-mail: editors@newinchess.com
Letters may be edited or abridged

Editorial postscript:

Thanks a lot for the correction. From the numerous reactions we received it became clear that there are more impressive unbeaten streaks out there than we presented! Among other streaks that were brought to our attention were 67 games by Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, and as we go to press Wesley So has raised his unbeaten streak to that same number.

Chess table

The chess table shown in New In Chess 2017/1, page 99, was most probably made in Cuba for the 1966 Olympiad. Each team captain was presented with a table, plus a set of pieces, as a gift and souvenir. The diamond-shaped features were to hold the flags.

It is of interest to note that one of these Cuban tables was used by Bobby Fischer and Tigran Petrosian in the match between the Soviet Union and the Rest of the World in 1970. The other tables in that match were of a different kind.

Jan-Olof Forsberg
Gothenburg, Sweden

Permanent time-trouble

I would like to hear your view on the now common time controls with increments. Am I the only one who has problems with it? I get into a 'perpetual feeling of time-trouble' after, say, 15-20 moves into the game. I suspect this is because I really don't like numbers and cannot logically add the increments into my thought process.

Maybe there will be an inspiring article from Negi about it in the future!? ☺

Maik Naundorf
Hagen, Germany

Editorial postscript:

Parimarjan Negi deals with your question in this issue!

COLOPHON

PUBLISHER: Allard Hoogland
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam
HONORARY EDITOR:
Jan Timman
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR: Anish Giri
EDITORS: Peter Boel, René Olthof
ART-DIRECTION: Jan Scholtus
PRODUCTION: Joop de Groot
TRANSLATORS: Ken Neat, Piet Verhagen
SALES AND ADVERTISING: Remmelt Otten

© No part of this magazine may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher.

NEW IN CHESS
P.O. BOX 1093
1810 KB ALKMAAR
THE NETHERLANDS

PHONE: 00-31-(0)72-51 27 137
E-MAIL:
SUBSCRIPTIONS: nic@newinchess.com
EDITORS: editors@newinchess.com
SALES AND ADVERTISING:
otten@newinchess.com

BANK DETAILS:
IBAN: NL41ABNA 0589126024
BIC: ABNANL2A in favour of Interchess BV, Alkmaar, The Netherlands

WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

Making the Fewest Mistakes

Many of the world's top players are capable of playing a perfect, or near perfect, game. But what about doing that game after game? That seems impossible, but some players have come close. The following graphic shows the lowest error rates over a series of games, based on the average rate that each player's moves deviated from the best choice, according to a powerful search engine.

The data are based on research by Ken Regan, an associate professor of computer science at the University at Buffalo. (Dr. Regan's research is used by the World Chess Federation to try to identify possible cheaters.) Oddly, the players with the lowest error rates did not necessarily have the highest percentage of moves that matched the computer's top choice. *DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN*

Average error rate per move (% of a pawn in an equal position)		Event	Rate at which moves matched Rybka 3, running at a search depth of 13-ply (%)
0.021	Boris Spassky	*1988 Olympiad (Thessaloniki, Greece)*	59.6
	Vladimir Kramnik	*2007 Dortmund*	76.3
	Sergey Grigoriants	*2011 Moscow Championship*	62.9
0.022	Vladimir Kramnik	*2010 Bilbao Final*	65.3
	Michael Adams	*2007 Candidates match (Alexei Shirov)*	69.6
0.023	Jozsef Horvath	*1991 Hungarian Championship*	60.4
	Vassily Ivanchuk	*1991 Candidates match (Leonid Yudasin)*	69.4
	Vladimir Kramnik	*2006 Olympiad (Turin, Italy)*	64.5
	Alexander Khalifman	*1995 Jan Hein Donner Memorial*	56.1
0.024	Ljubomir Ljubojevic	*1987 Brussels*	59.4
	Vladimir Akopian	*2005 World Team Championship*	66.3
	Igor Khenkin	*2011 German Championship*	71.0
0.025	Mikhail Tal	*1983 Match with Ulf Andersson*	66.1
	Etienne Bacrot	*2011 Poikovsky*	67.4
	Alexander Khalifman	*1995 Novosibirsk*	57.2
0.026	Evgeny Vorobiov	*2009 Moscow Championship*	61.7
	Garry Kasparov	*1985 Match with Ulf Andersson*	69.1
	Jorge Sammour-Hasbun	*2009 Foxwoods Open*	49.2
	Florin Gheorghiu	*1964 Olympiad (Tel Aviv, Israel)*	66.2
	Lev Polugaevsky	*1979 Wijk aan Zee*	63.1
	Dmitry Jakovenko	*2012 Poikovsky*	61.7
	José Raúl Capablanca	*1919 Match with Borislav Kostic*	64.2
0.027	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	*2011 György Marx Memorial*	65.6
	Leinier Dominguez	*2009 World Cup (non rapid games)*	57.7
	Anish Giri	*2011 Dortmund*	59.0
	Wang Yue	*2009 Maotai Prince Cup Kings*	59.5
	Ulf Andersson	*1981 Wijk aan Zee*	57.9

Despite playing accurately, Adams still lost the match (in a playoff) to Shirov.

Though Khalifman played accurately in both tournaments in 1995, it was small consolation, as he did not win either one.

Capablanca was expected to win the match against Kostic, but people thought it would be competitive. Instead, Capablanca whitewashed Kostic, 5-0.

Fair & Square

Sir Tim Rice: 'If I were re-launching *CHESS* today I would give the show a different title. I wouldn't make such major changes from the original album for the stage production and I would never let other writers into the project.'
(The famed lyricist, answering questions about his thoughts on his World Chess Championship-themed musical's past, present and future)

Edward Winter: 'Nobody knows, even roughly, how many people play chess, and nobody should pretend to know.'
(The historian chips in on FIDE claims bandied around that 600 million people play chess)

Hip-Hop Chess Federation motto: 'Chess is jujitsu for the mind. Jujitsu is chess for the body.'

Boris Spassky: 'In my life, I have had many stages. I was dying from hunger. I was beaten by people. Then I had glamour, I had money, I became a millionaire. I missed only one [of the seven stages the Bard describes]: participating in the war. But two divorces – this is participating in the war.'
(The 10th World Champion alluding to Shakespeare during a 1985 newspaper interview by Grant Segall for the Sun-Sentinel in Florida)

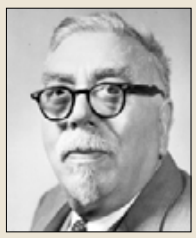
Joris van der Voet: 'Running the government like a company is like playing a game of chess with the rules of checkers.'
(The assistant professor Public Management at Leiden University, in an open letter to American President Donald Trump in the Dutch newspaper de Volkskrant)

Frances Hardinge: 'He felt like a chess-master who, two moves from achieving checkmate, suddenly sees a live kitten dropped on to the middle of the board, scattering pieces.'
(The award-winning British children's writer, in her book 'A Face Like Glass')

Alexander den Heijer: 'Champions don't show up to get everything they want; they show up to give everything they have.'
(So says the Dutch inspirational speaker)

Howard Stern: 'I was Googling for a chess instructor. Your name came up and I was hoping you could help me find one.'
(The shock-jock's opening telephone conversation with NM Dan Heisman, that led him to take chess lessons)

Lata Subramanian: 'The winning strategies in chess has always been something the powers-that-be have been particularly fond of... on the board and in life. I wonder if that's why we call the room where policymakers meet "the Board Room".'



Norbert Wiener: 'A single inattention may lose a chess game, whereas a single successful approach to a problem, among many which have been relegated to the wastebasket, will make a mathematician's reputation.'
(The eccentric American MIT mathematician best known as the father of cybernetics)

Walter Shipman: 'It began to feel as though you were playing against chess itself.'
(The American IM, who died recently in San Francisco, aged 87, on playing Bobby Fischer)

Stephen Moss: 'It didn't solve my midlife crises... but just occasionally I play a game I'm proud of and my heart leaps a little.'
(The Guardian writer's conclusion from his new chess-themed book on playing chess and the chess circuit, The Rookie)

Marc Lowrance: 'You may knock your opponent down with a chessboard, but that does not prove that you are the better player.'

Brian Kiley: 'In my high school, my sister went out with the captain of the chess team. My parents loved him... they figured that any guy that took hours to make a move was okay with them.'
(The stand-up comedian, writer and actor)

BAS BEEKHUIZEN

Monaco, 1993. Joop van Oosterom watches Lev Polugaevsky, the man who came up with the idea of the Amber tournament, suggest a move.

Our game has always depended on the generosity of benefactors, but it is safe to say that no one ever supported chess as lavishly as he did. Having made his fortune as an IT pioneer, Monaco-based Joop van Oosterom was a Maecenas extraordinaire, spending an estimated 50 million euros on his beloved game. Best known were the luxurious Amber Blindfold and Rapid tournaments on the Côte d'Azur, but there were many more. Van Oosterom was a highly private person. Perhaps typically, his death, on October 22, became publicly known only three months later.

Sharing a lifelong passion

The amazing chess legacy of Dutch billionaire Joop van Oosterom (1937-2016)

DIRK JAN TEN GEUZENDAM

The last Amber tournament took place six years ago, but when Vladimir Kramnik starts sharing his memories of Joop van Oosterom's best known chessic brainchild, it doesn't take him long to wax nostalgic: 'Every time I arrived at Nice airport, I automatically got into a good mood. The sun is shining, it's warm. I know that I am going to have great food, there will be relaxing walks along the boulevard, a splendid view of the sea. On the terrace of my hotel room I will have my first coffee, thinking about the games of that day. It was rare to play chess under such conditions.'

Perhaps, Kramnik adds, the proximity to the Mediterranean reminded him of his childhood, of the view he had of the Black Sea from his home in Tuapse. But that was only an added bonus, since it would be all but impossible to think of any participant that didn't love to come to the Côte d'Azur to happily undergo the full Van Oosterom treatment.

The pampering started at the airport, where the players would be picked up to be taken to their hotel by helicopter or limousine. In the three years that the tournament was held in Nice, this was a short drive to the magnificent Palais de la Méditerranée on the Boulevard des Anglais. In the other years it was a breath-taking flight or drive along the Mediterranean coast. Twice, the players stayed in the Vista Palace hotel perched on a rock high above Monte Carlo. The other events took place in the heart of Monaco,

Joop van Oosterom together with organizer Corry Vreeken and David Bronstein at the experimental knock-out tournament (the players took on their opponents in six games simultaneously) in Rotterdam in 1990.

mostly in the five-star Metropole Hotel next to the Casino.

Upon their arrival they would find one or more carefully selected welcome gifts in their room and a programme booklet with the full schedule, including descriptions of the excursions on the free days. These could be anything, from visits to historical villages, perfume factories, golf courses, the casino or laser games, to a relaxed meal in one of the best restaurants in the region.

Sometimes they would also receive presents at home, well before they travelled to the Côte. I remember Boris Gelfand telling me that one day, months before the Amber tournament, he had got a call from the local post office. A huge parcel had arrived and he was asked to come and pick it up. Gelfand had no idea what to expect, but was delighted to find that it was an original shuffleboard, an old Dutch game that, besides a lot of table football, was fanatically played in the Amber hospitality lounge. Joop van Oosterom's wife Muriel had thought that, besides their chess preparation, the players might also want to train for the inevitable shuffleboard clashes.

Kramnik was one of the most regular Amber guests, playing 17 of the 20 tournaments and winning a record six times. He missed the first two events in 1992 and 1993 ('because I was not yet so well-known') and the 2006 edition ('when I was ill'). The only person who played in all 20 tournaments was Vassily Ivanchuk. 'Chucky' was a popular participant and the affection was mutual, as was comically illustrated several months before the 2010 edition. In an impulsive reaction to his elimination from the World Cup in Khanty-Mansiysk at the hands of 16-year-old Wesley So, the Ukrainian wizard had announced his retirement from professional chess. In the following week, many fans expressed their regret and sadness about his decision, but the organizers in Monaco knew that these worries were unwarranted: literally hours after he had 'quit' chess, Ivanchuk had replied positively to the invitation to the next Amber tournament in an email full of enthusiastic exclamation marks!

What a great idea, Polu!

The first tournament in 1992 was shrouded in mystery, at least for me and anyone else who was not there. My travels to the south of France would only start the next year, first as a journalist and from 2006 as the press officer. The last four years I was the tournament director. This was a privilege I could not have imagined when I first heard rumours about the exceptional chess tournament that was going to be held close to Monaco back in 1992. Joop van Oosterom was well-known in Dutch chess circles as the sponsor of Volmac Rotterdam, the club that dominated the highest Dutch league. And I remember how impressed I was when I read in a newspaper that he had promised the Polgar sisters financial support to the tune of $100,000. Later I heard that he had even considered inviting the entire Polgar family to come and live in the Netherlands, but under Dutch law the parents would not have been allowed to teach their children at home.

But this event was something different, as became clear when the first stories reached the outside world. The invited grandmasters had played their games wallowing in luxury and no expenses were spared to make them feel at ease. The generosity of the host knew no bounds, and as a result some guests started ordering the most expensive wines or making hour-long phone calls to Russia, which at the time were very costly. Eyebrows were raised in the organizational team and it was clear that some restrictions could be expected if there was going to be a next tournament. This was indeed what happened. From then on, players and guests were supposed to

‘Joop van Oosterom’s wife Muriel had thought that, besides their chess preparation, the players might also want to train for the inevitable shuffleboard clashes.’

pay for extras like laundry, telephone and room service, but to cover ‘such unforeseen expenses’ they received pocket money. In short, it remained very hard to spend any money at a Van Oosterom event.

In the book of the first Amber tournament, Joop van Oosterom explained how the idea had originated. It was his good friend Lev Polugaevsky who had suggested that it would be wonderful to stage a tournament with top players under the best conditions.

What can we say? What a great idea, Polu! And let’s not forget that Polugaevsky had another brilliant brainwave two years later, when Van Oosterom asked him what he wanted to have for his 60th birthday and the Russian grandmaster came up with a Sicilian theme tournament. What’s more, he was even given the choice of where he wanted to unwrap his birthday present, and much to the delight of everyone involved, he chose Buenos Aires.

But back to 1992. Van Oosterom was happy to follow Polugaevsky’s suggestion, simply because he loved chess and because he and his wife wanted to express their happiness about the birth of their daughter Melody Amber. At the same time, the format was further proof of his attempts to make chess attractive as a spectator sport. Van Oosterom had always been looking for ways to present chess in an entertaining manner. For instance, in 1990, following an old idea of Bronstein’s, he had organized a spectacular knock-out tournament in Rotterdam in which the participants played their opponents on six boards simultaneously.

BAS BEEKHUIZEN

At the prize-giving of the 1993 Amber tournament (l.to r.): Joop van Oosterom, Anatoly Karpov. John Nunn, Jeroen Piket and Judit Polgar. And Ljubomir Ljubojevic in front of the sponsor.

Still, despite Van Oosterom’s wish to promote chess, the Amber tournament never attracted many spectators. The first time there were only a handful, including the widow of Marcel Duchamp, but even in later years there would rarely be more than 20 spectators other than the guests of the family. They were welcome and there were seats for them, but most fans were probably discouraged by the splendour of the venues.

Innovative and controversial

The first Amber tournament consisted of rapid games only, which doesn’t sound very revolutionary now, but this format was quite innovative and controversial at the time. Many leading players were still sceptical about faster games or simply abhorred the idea. Only two years earlier, Garry Kasparov had been unambiguous when he expressed his views on rapid chess, which at the time was often called active chess, in an interview: ‘I am categorically against any attempt to create a professional competition in active chess. Completely against. (..) It will destroy chess completely. (..) If the quality is disappearing, what can you expect from chess? You could play any other game on the table. It’s no longer chess, it’s something else.’

As it was, Van Oosterom himself was not too taken with the level of the rapid games in the first Amber tournament. There simply were too many mistakes. He blamed the heavy schedule of three games a day and the lack of experience of the players with the faster time-control. Especially Karpov divided his time disastrously, often thinking for 20 or 25 minutes on a handful of moves and then losing on time. A nice windfall for some of his opponents, perhaps, but a true chess lover like Van Oosterom didn’t see the fun of the former World Champion losing to Kortchnoi with two queens against a rook.

The solution he felt was the Fischer clock, as time increments would

prevent silly losses on time. And sure enough, this new clock was used in the second tournament. Tom Fürstenberg, the co-author of Bronstein's wonderful book *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, had the clocks produced in a limited number and brought them to Monaco. On one of the free days he also invited the players to test the clock in blitz. After this experience Fürstenberg gave them a questionnaire to air their views. Again, from today's perspective it's remarkable how many objections the players had. Can you imagine now that Vishy Anand was opposed to the Fischer clock? ('My opponent's time-trouble is not my problem, he should divide his time better.')

The Fischer clock also led to a new ritual in the 'press room', the room with comfortable seats and ample food and drink, where the players had their post-mortems and watched the other games if they were not playing themselves. Every time a player got to his final seconds, a communal countdown chant would start that did not stop till the game was over. The convivial atmosphere in the press room was one of the outstanding features of the Amber tournament that made it different from most other elite events. After they finished their games the grandmasters didn't disappear immediately, but mingled with the other guests, cracking jokes and commenting on the exploits of their colleagues, preferably if these took unexpected turns. 'Shall we sing David Bowie's 'Absolute beginners' when they come here after the game?'

Right from the start, one of the dominant voices was Ljubomir Ljubojevic's. First as a participant and later as a guest, voluble 'Ljubo' would entertain the room with his incessant and inimitable commentary, typically changing his assessment of a position in mid-sentence, inventing adjectives such as 'trickful' and creating classics like 'White is clearly slightly better'.

Blindfold

The second tournament also saw the introduction of blindfold games, which would leave an indelible mark on the Amber tournament. Contrary to what often has been written, this was not a fanatical idea pursued by the sponsor. Actually, it more or less came about by happen-stance. As the organizers wanted to reduce the number of games to be played on one day, they first thought about two rapid games. And then thought of one rapid game and 'something else', which became a blindfold game. And again it was Van Oosterom himself who was vocally critical of the level of the blindfold games. The older players in particular struggled, and it was clear that more practice was needed to raise that level. In a first reaction, Van Oosterom said that he was not sure there would be blindfold games again in 1994, and he expressed his annoyance with the end of the blindfold game between Piket and Ivanchuk. In an attempt to go for move repetition, Ivanchuk had moved a rook instead of his king when he repeated for the third time, which allowed Piket a mate in two. But the Dutchman, understanding his opponent's mistake, proposed a draw instead, which the sponsor thought was ridiculous. 'They both should have got a zero! Suppose Ivanchuk wins the tournament with a half-point margin, what will the runner-up think?'

'Shall we sing David Bowie's 'Absolute beginners' when they come here after the game?'

Despite these initial doubts, the blindfold games remained and as the players got used to this unusual discipline, the inevitable occasional 'oversights' never disappeared, but there was more than enough compensation in stunning brilliancies and baffling technical achievements.

In fact, Van Oosterom was not thinking too much about the blindfold competition. There was another project he found more appealing. He believed that the split in the chess world after the breakaway of Kasparov and Short in 1993 could be repaired by a six-player tournament comparable to the 1948 World Championship tournament in The Hague and Moscow, when the throne was vacant because of Alekhine's death. He had proposed the idea to Florencio Campomanes when the FIDE president visited Monaco and had even indicated his willingness to stage such a tournament every year. As we now know, nothing came of this idea, and we can only speculate what the chess world would have looked like if FIDE had jumped at this offer.

The thoughts about a six-player event were further testimony of the creativity of the host, or perhaps also of the restlessness of his mind. Although it was clear that this second tournament again cost him a decent sum of money, and everyone could see how much he enjoyed watching the best players analyse, he was often late. Not because of lack of interest, but because of too much love for chess; during the tournament he was playing in the championship of Monaco, finishing in shared first place!

Increasingly private person

The 1993 tournament would also be a watershed in Joop van Oosterom's personal life. Shortly afterwards, on a trip to Hong Kong, he suffered a stroke. He was flown back to the Netherlands, where two complicated operations saved his life. Out of gratitude for the expert medical care he had received, the family would sponsor several major medical projects. Although he

survived the stroke, his right arm and hand were paralysed and his speech affected. Through therapy he learned to talk again, but in his later years his speech became more and more problematic, often making it hard for him to fully express himself. For people who met him for the first time in those years it was often difficult to understand that his mind remained as sharp as ever. After his stroke he certainly became an increasingly private person, but his passion for chess remained as great as ever. In fact, his most active years as a sponsor were still to come. At the end of a chess tournament it is commonly hoped that the sponsor will announce another one for the next year. At the closing dinner of the 1995 Amber tournament, Van Oosterom not only announced a next edition, but also a team tournament between Ladies and Veterans in Prague, two matches involving Dutch hope Jeroen Piket, and the Mini-Olympiad in Monaco!

FRED LUCAS

After the closing dinner of the last Amber tournament, Melody and Muriel van Oosterom posed together with the players in the Salle Belle Epoque of the Hermitage Hotel in Monaco. The field in 2011 (l. to r.): Gashimov, Grischuk, Aronian, Topalov, Nakamura, Giri, Gelfand, Carlsen, Kramnik, Karjakin, Anand and Ivanchuk.

Max Euwe's advice

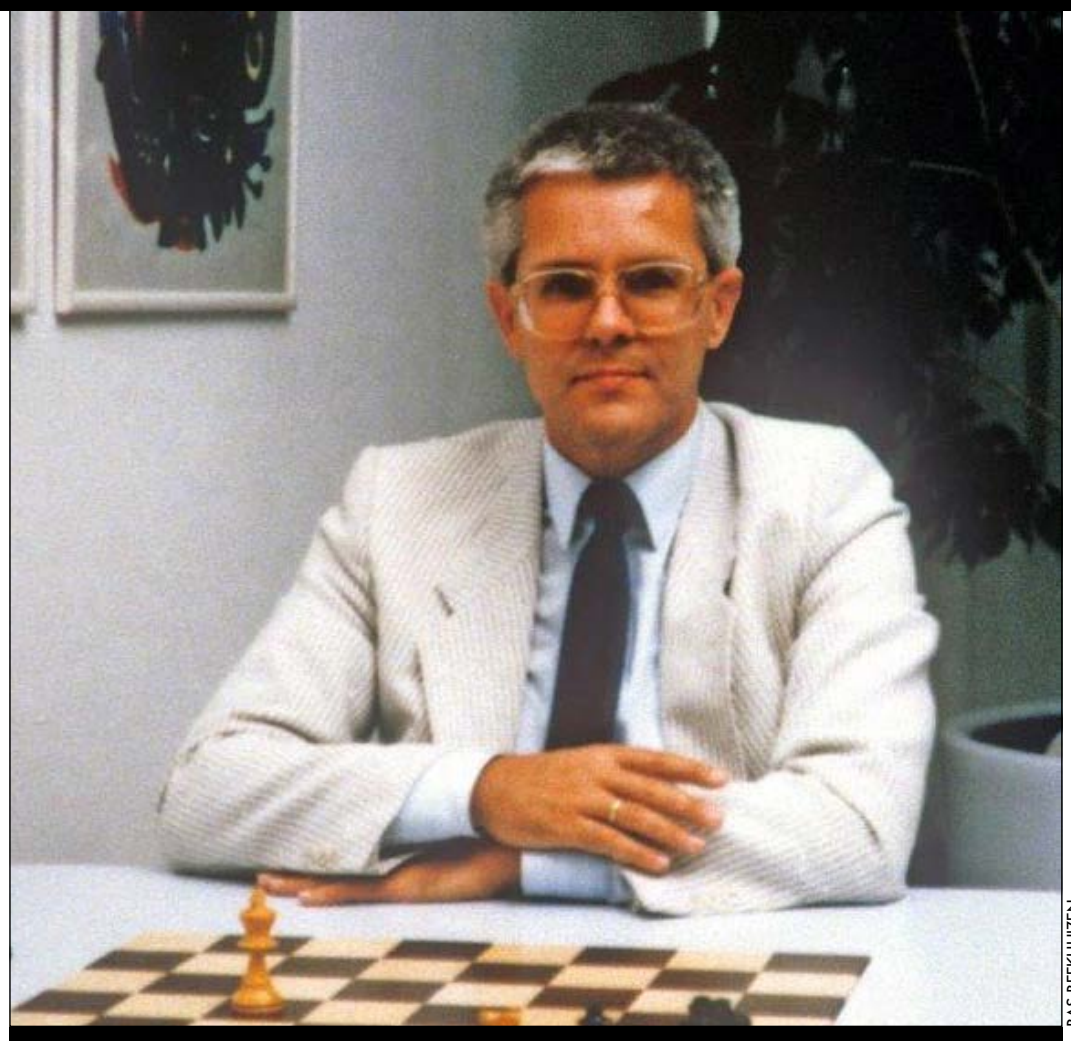
Saying that chess was his life would not mean much, but chess certainly changed Joop van Oosterom's life. When he discovered his talent for the game as a youngster this proved a life-changing eye-opener. As he explained in a rare interview in the late 1980s, he discovered that by winning games he could prove that his views were correct, which gave his self-confidence a tremendous boost. His opinions counted and he did not need to doubt his thoughts, whatever others said. In 1955 he became junior champion of the Netherlands, and in that same year he played in the World Junior Championship, which was won by Boris Spassky. Van Oosterom had a modest result, but he would not forget his opponents, and decades later he invited Spassky and Lajos Portisch to play in his Ladies vs. Veterans tournaments.

He loved chess, but he also realized his limitations when he looked at the achievements of the greatest masters. At one point, he had told himself that he would either become World Champion or a millionaire, and it became increasingly clear that only the second option remained. But chess continued to play a role, because former World Champion Max Euwe drew his attention to computers, saying it might be something for him. And it was, because it liberated him from the sorrow of chess and offered him a field ideally suited for his search for perfection and his endless ambition. No longer would he have to suffer after a beautifully played game ruined by one brief lapse of concentration. If you made a mistake as a programmer, you just went back a step and tried again till you had made a perfect product.

He entered the computer industry believing in his own convictions and essentially lacking any formal training. His university days had been short-lived, since he repeatedly tried to convince his economy and math professors of their mistakes, bluntly and with little or no diplomacy, and with the directness and unshakeable certainty that never left him.

When he started to work for IBM, he was asked what his ambitions were. Without hesitation he said that he wanted to be president of IBM in the Netherlands within the next five years. He was told that this was possible if he followed the career path they projected. But here, too, his convictions clashed with what they had in mind. The focus at IBM was on building hardware, while Van Oosterom firmly believed that there was a much greater need for software and that this demand would only grow in the years ahead. He was also convinced that the big clients were looking for solutions that were tailor-made for their companies.

To prove his point he left IBM in 1966, and together with Jan Mol, whom he had met at IBM, he founded Volmac, a company that would prove a huge success thanks to the perfect symbiosis between the founders. Van Oosterom was the ever active achiever, with unlimited energy, while Mol (who also loved chess and



BAS BEEKHUIZEN

Joop van Oosterom in his office in the 1980s. It was not unusual for visitors to be asked if they played chess and if they did, the outcome was predictable.

would later sponsor tournaments in Antwerp and London) was of a calmer nature and if needed pulled him back to earth.

In 1987, when Volmac employed two thousand people and continued to grow, Van Oosterom gave a couple of interviews. One of them was to the Dutch magazine *Quote*, which 10 years later would start publishing an annual list of the richest families and persons in the country. The openness with which he spoke to them in 1987 had long vanished when these lists started to appear and the Van Oosterom family never provided any information for the 'Quote 500'. But based on what they could gather themselves, the magazine estimated his wealth as being between 1.1 and 1.2 billion euros.

Stupid competitors

In the interview, Van Oosterom comes across as an extremely energetic and ambitious entrepreneur, confidently proclaiming his own views and having no qualms about characterizing his competitors as stupid. The interviewer makes a point of describing the high-pitched voice with which he speaks his mind, so it is easy to imagine how he must have got on these competitors' nerves, mainly, I guess, because Volmac's results proved him right.

It's also interesting to see how loyal he remained to the original philosophies that he propounded. One of his convictions was that in the interest of the company, an employee should not try to work on his weaknesses, but try to improve on his strengths. If someone was a brilliant programmer but a poor letter writer, he should try to become an even better programmer. For his letters, a secretary could be hired. Wasn't this similar to what he did many years later, in 2003, when he asked Dutch grandmaster Jeroen Piket to head his family office, not worrying about the possible lack of experience in certain areas, but convinced of the qualities he had seen?

Likewise, Van Oosterom had no time for trade unions, since he believed his way of caring for his employees was more effective. They were stimulated to become shareholders and profit from the growth of the company. Those who did so will tell you that again he had a point. Loyalty was of great importance to him, as could be seen from the numbers of old friends that were invited to the tournaments he organized.

Correspondence Chess World Champion

In his office he had a chess set and it was not unusual for visitors to be asked if they played chess. If they did, the outcome was predictable, both what happened next and who won. An uncommon but perhaps effective start of a business talk. After he had given up his dream of being a professional chess player, Van Oosterom expressed another chess ambition. One day he wanted to be correspondence chess World Champion. After all, correspondence chess was a perfect way to remain involved in the game if you had little free time. Moreover, one of the things he enjoyed most was analysing positions and developing strategies with other players. This had always been one of his favourite pastimes, and once his financial means allowed it, he would invite strong players for such sessions – initially Dutch masters, but soon afterwards, starting with Lev Polugaevsky, strong grandmasters. The process fascinated him, especially when chess programs became stronger, adding a further component to the joint analysis.

Correspondence chess requires patience and tournaments take ages, but in 2003 he finally won the world title. And he did so again in 2007. Needless to say, he used all the advice he could get, but there was one expert who was never involved. Predictably, when Jeroen Piket moved to Monaco, many people in chess circles drew the conclusion that he was going to help Van Oosterom with his correspondence games. In actual fact, he was never involved in any of the correspondence games, if only because he was way too busy with the work he had been hired for.

Conspicuously absent

Looking at the players that took part in the 20 Amber tournaments, you will find that two names are conspicuously absent: Jan Timman and Garry

Kasparov. As the country's number one, Timman was one of the stars in the Volmac team that dominated the Dutch league for many years, yet he was never invited to Amber. Their relations probably turned sour after the European Club Cup final in Rotterdam in 1988, which was sponsored by Van Oosterom. As he had just competed in the World Cup in Belfort, Timman claimed that he was tired and could only play every other day. The three games he played, all draws, failed to impress the sponsor, who was upset and felt one of his key players had let the team down. And there was an earlier occasion that Van Oosterom had not forgotten about, when he visited a tournament in Germany. While watching Timman analyse after the game he had made a suggestion, which was ignored with a snub that had hurt.

There was reason to believe that when Van Oosterom sponsored 10 matches for Piket, he did so in imitation of the 10 annual matches that the Dutch broadcasting company KRO had organized for Timman. In 1995, Van Oosterom took a remarkable decision when, giving in to public demand, he agreed to finance a match between Timman and Piket. The prize-fund was 100,000 guilders, more or less the equivalent of 100,000 euros now, to be split fifty-fifty, independently of the result. No doubt much to Van Oosterom's chagrin, Timman won 6-4, but he magnanimously went up to the winner to congratulate him.

Garry Kasparov's absence from Amber says a lot about Van Oosterom's character and the way he did business. The World Champion was most welcome and was actually invited for the rapid tournament in Roquebrune in 1992. But after a deal had been reached and Kasparov had accepted a generous starting fee, a further request reached Monaco from Moscow asking for an additional 700 dollars for his flight. Van Oosterom's reaction was short and simple. He told

Judit Polgar

'I first met Joop van Oosterom in early 1989, shortly after I occupied the number 1 spot in the women's world ranking. We had a friend who was in contact with him and made a very "memorable move" to introduce Joop to my family. We were all invited to come to Holland and at one point I challenged Joop to a game where I was playing blindfolded. He got so enthusiastic about the experience that he immediately wanted to help my family and already the next day he sent us a laptop computer. Which was amazing for us at the time. He was very curious to know how fast I could improve if I got financial support for trainings. Undoubtedly he gave my career a great push and he even organized a tournament for me. Thanks to this help I changed my repertoire from the King's Gambit to the Ruy Lopez and besides the Benko Gambit I learned the King's Indian.

I will never forget the month I spent in Aruba in 1992, where Joop gave me the opportunity to train with the legendary Bent Larsen. But apart from creating the opportunity to have some of the greatest trainers, he also always paid attention so that people around him had a great time. One of his favourite excursions was to go around the island of Aruba by Jeep. There is a great picture of him and my family as we got stuck in the mud during that trip.

In my heart he will forever stay the person who always smiled and wanted to have quality experiences and share them with others. A man with a great heart.'

Aruba 1992. The Jeep got stuck in the mud, so what? While Klara Polgar starts pushing, Judit, Joop van Oosterom and Sofie listen to the photographer.

BAS BEEKHUIZEN

As Jan Timman is supplying the press with quotes, Joop van Oosterom is waiting to congratulate the Dutchman on his 6-4 match win against Jeroen Piket.

his team to forget about Kasparov and invite someone else. As he explained one year later in the Amber tournament book: 'Some players make the mistake of trying to bargain with me. And I don't, ever. I learnt that in the software world. I make an offer and the answer is yes or no.'

He was equally intransigent when Anatoly Karpov, after he had won the FIDE World Championship, suddenly asked for an increased starting fee on the eve of the Amber tournament. They already had a deal, Van Oosterom said, and he saw no reason to honour Karpov's request. It marked the beginning of slightly strained relations with Karpov. Although Van Oosterom admired him as a player, he believed his repeated demands for a higher starting fee at the end of the '90s were unreasonable. He didn't see why a player who no longer competed for the top prizes would go home with more money than the winner.

Once the Amber tournament included blindfold games, Kasparov's participation was no longer an issue, as he rejected blindfold chess, saying he preferred to keep his sanity. Nevertheless an attempt was made to make him change his mind. During a car ride in Sarajevo in 1999 I told him that it was a pity that the greatest chess benefactor ever and the best player on the planet had never met. Would he mind if I arranged a meeting? Kasparov agreed and so did Joop van Oosterom, and in early September they met in Monaco. Over dinner we talked about various events that could be organized, including a clock simul against the Dutch team, but it was clear that the host wanted Kasparov to make one concession first and agree to play in Amber. When Kasparov objected once again, I took the liberty of challenging his pride by saying that to my mind it was not a matter of principle, but rather that he was afraid to play blindfold because he believed his rivals were more experienced, a fear that in his case was based on nothing, since it went without saying that he would do well. I still see Kasparov's unamused look and Van Oosterom's broad smile as he nodded enthusiastically.

After dinner I asked Kasparov if he could show Van Oosterom the fascinating endgame he had in the Internet game that he was playing against The World at the time. As the rest of the company went out, the two of them were left alone at the chessboard, where they still were, entranced by variations, when I returned 40 minutes later. Looking at their faces, I believed we had made considerable progress.

When he left Monaco, it was clear that it was all up to Kasparov. If he played Amber, the other events would follow automatically. Secretly I hoped that perhaps one of those other ideas could be tried first, but when I asked Van Oosterom the next time I saw him, his answer was clear: 'He doesn't want to play Amber, so there is nothing to talk about.'

One-hundred-euro note

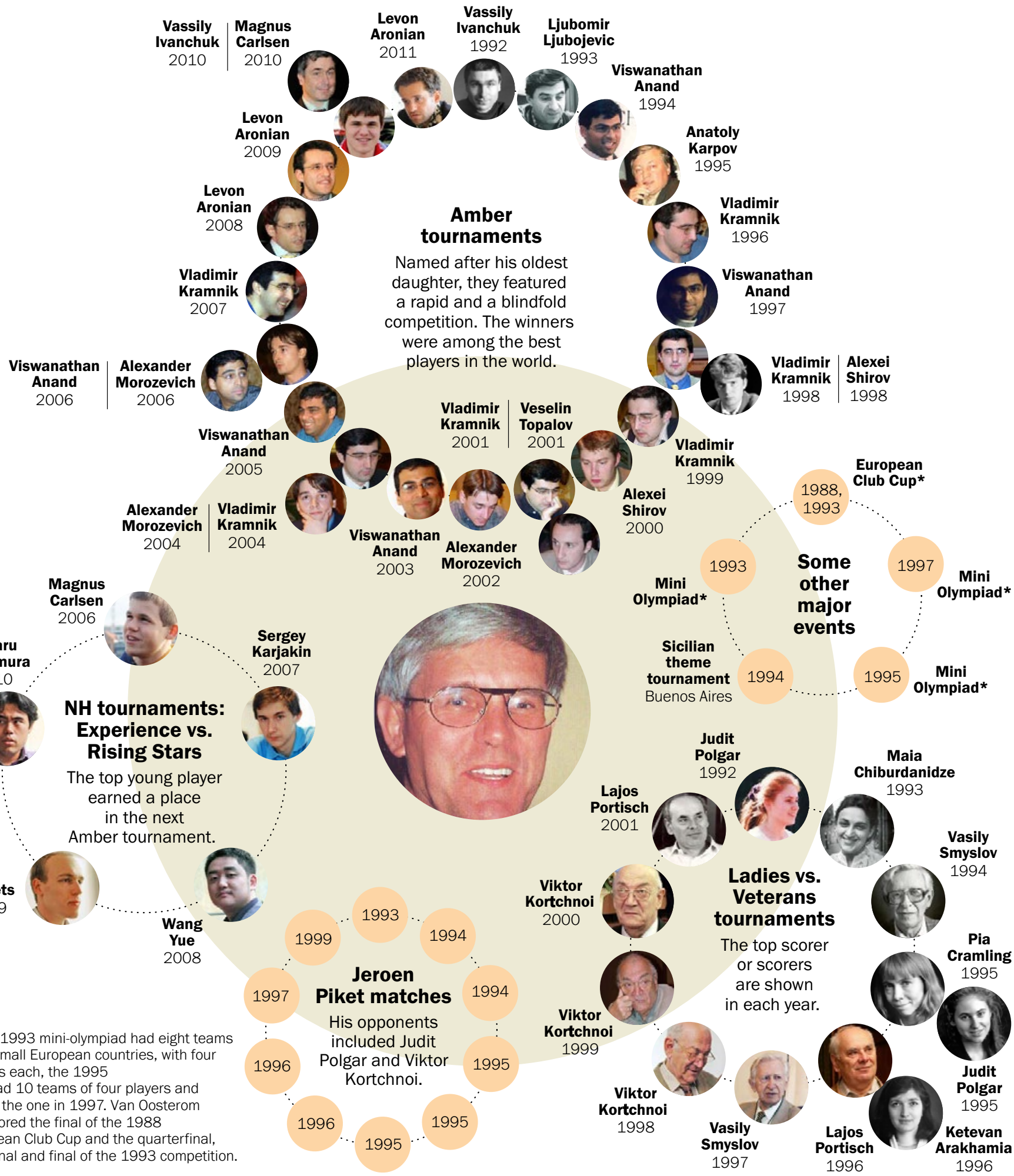
As I am writing down these memories, I am aware that the emphasis on Joop van Oosterom's wealth is inevitable, but that in a way it doesn't fully do him justice. What I always found fascinating is that although he lived a life of luxury in Monaco, his actual wishes were quite modest. He didn't collect art, didn't have horses, didn't play golf and had no interest in expensive wines. For many years there was a yacht, but after his stroke he no longer felt comfortable on the ship. Finally the ship was sold, which must have been a relief for the captain, who had spent many idle months on it and was delighted if someone dropped by for a cup of coffee.

The most generous chess sponsor ever liked to watch the grandmasters analyse or play, just as he liked to watch the best billiards players that he invited. And he liked a rubber of cards with a glass of beer. Everyone who visited his events will smile at the memory of his voluble curses if a card game didn't go his way. And he liked to go to the casino, to gamble and play poker or, his favourite, blackjack. A serious player, not taking uncalled-for risks and playing to win. While he was playing he would leave his dogs, black Labradors, with the doorman or the ladies in the cloakroom. They were always happy to see him, if only because they knew that upon leaving he would tip them a one-hundred-euro note.

In Van Oosterom's Orbit

Joop van Oosterom was best known for sponsoring the seminal Amber tournaments, but his sponsorships went well beyond that. Over about 20 years, he sponsored other major tournaments, matches, three mini-olympiads and the 1993 Women's World Championship match. He also sponsored two chess clubs in the top Dutch league: HSG, for 30 years, and Volmac Rotterdam, for 18 years. In all, it is estimated that he invested between 40 and 50 million euros in supporting chess. The following graphic lists most, but not all, of the events that he sponsored.

DYLAN LOEB McCLAIN



* The 1993 mini-olympiad had eight teams from small European countries, with four players each, the 1995 one had 10 teams of four players and so did the one in 1997. Van Oosterom sponsored the final of the 1988 European Club Cup and the quarterfinal, semifinal and final of the 1993 competition.

Memorable Amber Moments

As Joop van Oosterom first and foremost was a great chess lover, we felt that this article should also contain... chess. We invited the four most successful players of 20 years of 'Amber' to share memories and annotate one of their favourite games. Three chose a blindfold game.

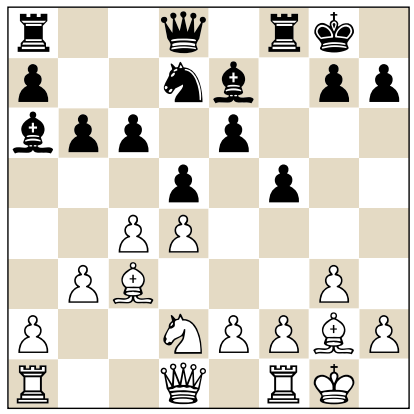
Vishy Anand

'For me the Amber tournament was one of the special events on the calendar. Everything seemed designed just to give us pleasure. The atmosphere, the ambiance, the sheer luxury in which we were kept. Probably the first year made the biggest impression. I remember walking into the lobby of the hotel in Roquebrune and from the lobby you could see the Mediterranean basically down from the cliff side and it seemed unreal. One of the best views I'd ever seen. Joop was sitting in the lobby and he greeted us all. It was the best of everything. It was the ultimate social tournament as well. One could laugh the whole time between the rounds at the commentary. It was a place where even with your rivals you really relaxed and you let go of your guard. I have even seen players with contentious relations finding it silly to maintain this hostility in this tournament. It was a temporary truce for everything. On top of that there were the excursions, all kinds of special treats, the opening ceremony in itself was always fun. I remember the mermaids in the first year, the painting contest between the players, the year we had to guess the oil price. Now a lot of people think that for this it was just a fun tournament. But it wasn't. I took it extremely seriously. I wanted to do well and I knew that the setting would amplify the feelings you had. I recall the amazing hospitality and generosity of Joop and Muriel. And when I think of the Amber tournaments and everything else he sponsored, I have this heavy sense of the passing of one of the great patrons of chess. And I just wanted to thank him from the bottom of my heart for all the memories he gave us.'

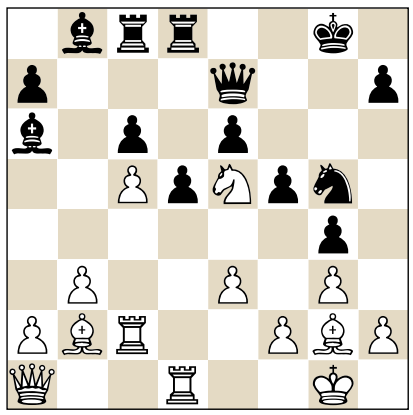
NOTES BY
Vishy Anand

Vladimir Kramnik
Vishy Anand
Nice rapid 2008
Queen's Indian, Nimzowitsch Variation

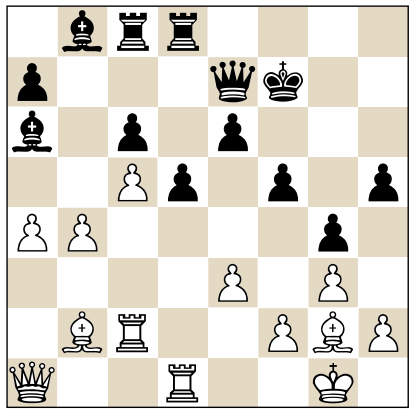
1.d4
While it's true that we were scheduled to play a match later that year, for me the Amber tournament was always a place to leave such considerations behind and simply enjoy the event.
1...♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 b6 4.g3 ♗a6 5.b3 ♗b4+ 6.♗d2 ♗e7 7.♗g2 c6 8.♗c3 d5 9.♘e5 ♘fd7 10.♘xd7 ♘xd7 11.♘d2 0-0 12.0-0 f5



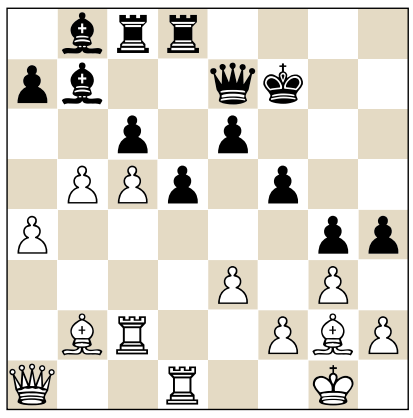
I didn't enjoy facing this move against Adams earlier that year in Wijk aan Zee (½-½, 56).
13.♖c1 ♘f6 14.♗b2 ♗d6 15.♘f3 ♕e7 16.♘e5 ♖ac8 17.♘d3 ♖fd8 18.♖e1
Here I started drifting.
18...♕e8 19.e3 g5 20.♖c2 g4 21.♕c1 ♕e7
At least stopping ♗a3.
22.♖d1 ♘e4 23.c5 bxc5 24.dxc5 ♗b8 25.♘e5 ♘g5 26.♕a1



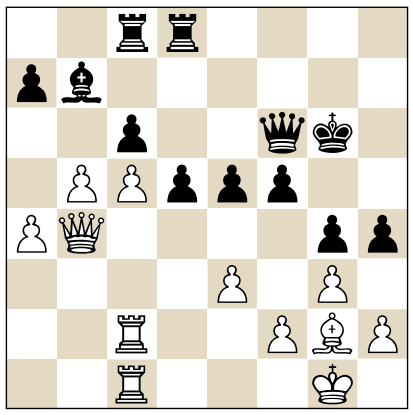
26...♘f7 I was keen to swap his knight, but 26...♕e8 27.f4 gxf3 28.♘xf3 ♕h5 looks OK for Black.
27.♘xf7 ♔xf7 28.a4 h5 29.b4



29...h4 After 29...♗c4 the exchange sacrifice 30.♖xc4 dxc4 31.♖c1 didn't seem pleasant to me. **30.b5 ♗b7** I didn't see how he could break through, so I didn't spend time on 30...cxb5.



31.♖dc1 ♔g6 32.♗e5 ♗xe5 33.♕xe5 ♕f6 34.♕d4! e5 35.♕b4



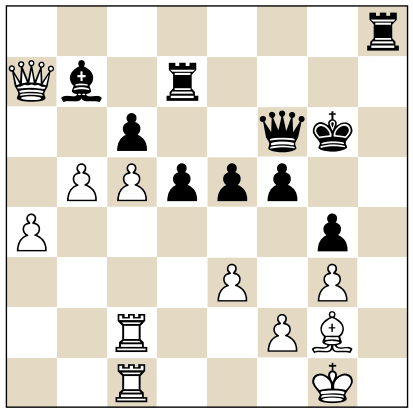
35...hxg3

Inaccurate. After 35...e4, 36.b6 a6 looks embarrassing, but how does White break through?

36.hxg3

Stronger was 36.fxg3!, and Black will regret opening up the f-file for White.

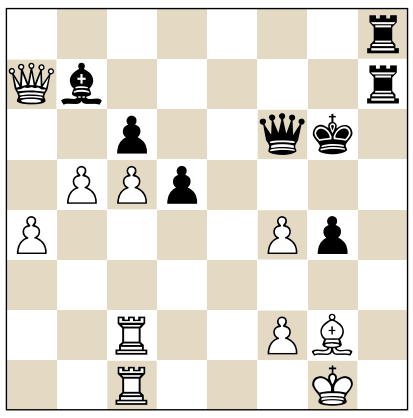
36...♖d7 37.♕a5 ♖h8 38.♕xa7



38...f4

This seems so natural. Bad was 38...♖a8? 39.♕b6 ♖xa4 40.♗xd5!.

39.exf4 exf4 40.gxf4 ♖dh7

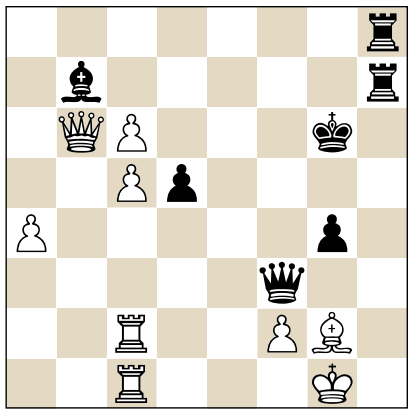


41.♕b6?

I was very happy. Now I could execute my idea.

Our silicon friend saves White with 41.♕a5 ♕xf4, and now White has 42.♖e1!! (42.♕c3 loses to 42...♖h3 43.♗xh3 – 43.♕d2 ♖h1+ 44.♗xh1 ♕h2+, and mate in 3 – 43...♖xh3) 42...♖h2 (here 42...♕f3 doesn't work: 43.♗xf3 gxf3 44.♖e6+ ♔f5 45.♖f6+! That's why the queen went to a5. 45...♔xf6 46.♕c3+, and White wins) 43.♕c3.

41...♕xf4 42.bxc6 ♕f3!



43.cxb7+ ♔f5

And there is no stopping the mate. White resigned.

Vladimir Kramnik

'Ever since the beginning of my career there has been a lot of talk about the professionalization of chess, with sponsors and everything. That's all very nice but I have not seen it yet on the scale we would like to see it. In this sense it's very important to have chess Maecenases like Van Oosterom. Chess for many centuries was driven by people like him. As at the start of the 20th century in Russia the Czar would personally pay for Lasker to come to a tournament. Of course, he was the main Maecenas in the 90s and 00s. He was a person full of life and emotions, with a lot of respect towards chess players. I may reveal something which I have never spoken about before, an unknown fact, as this seems a good moment. After I had won the World Championship match against Garry Kasparov in 2000, at the next

NEW IN CHESS

Vishy Anand and his wife Aruna at the closing dinner of the 2005 Amber Rapid and Blindfold Tournament, one of the five editions the Indian won.

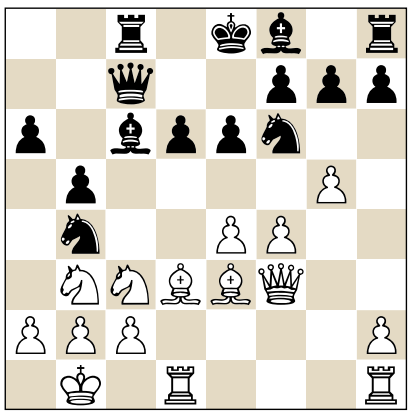
tournament in 2001, which I also won, he came to me at the closing ceremony and said, it's so great what you did, beating Kasparov. From now on I will give you first prize in all three sections, rapid, blindfold and combined, whatever your result is. I am sure he would have done it, but I told the organization that I didn't want it. It was too much, I wanted to play like everybody else.
I have great memories of him and I can only express my great gratitude. I don't think this can be repeated anymore, this special atmosphere, these exclusive tournaments.'

NOTES BY
Vladimir Kramnik

Vladimir Kramnik
Veselin Topalov
Monaco blindfold 2003
Sicilian, Scheveningen

This game was played in the Vista Hotel in Roquebrune, high above Monaco. I vividly remember the incredible view from my window of the Mediterranean. It was a memorable game because of the original and study-like finish. In this tournament my level of blindfold chess was particularly high.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 d6 6.♗e3 ♘f6 7.f4 a6 8.♕f3 ♕c7 9.0-0-0 ♗d7 10.♘b3 ♖c8 11.♔b1 b5 12.♗d3 ♘b4 13.g4 ♗c6 14.g5



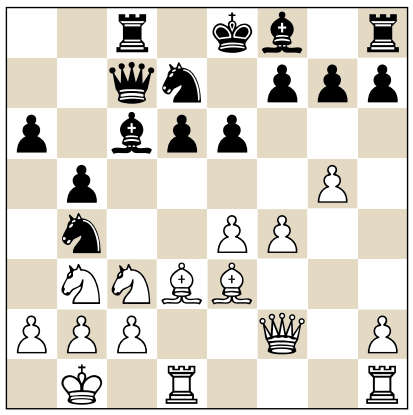
Black hasn't played the opening too well, but in blindfold chess you are believed to have much more freedom for experiments. Still, after this move White has a fantastic Sicilian.

14...♘d7

The right move.
I remember that during the game I was not so sure about 14...♘xe4, but after the game Veselin told me – we were still on speaking terms, it is that long ago – that he hadn't even considered it.
Now, as an addition to my original notes, I can say that today's computer shows a very strong continuation: 15.♘xe4 (15.♗xe4 d5 was my idea) 15...♘xd3 (or 15...d5 16.♘f6+! gxf6 17.♗d4, which boils down to the same thing) 16.♖xd3 d5 17.♘f6+! (very important) 17...gxf6 18.♗d4, and White has a large advantage.

15.♕f2

The computer says that 15.♗e2! is very strong. I was worried about 15...♘xc2 (15...d5 16.f5), but this is followed by the cool 16.♗f2, when the computer claims White has a very large advantage. But this is too complicated for a blindfold game with a rapid time-control.

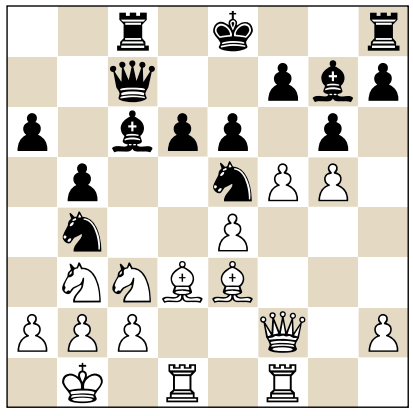


15...g6

Stopping f4-f5. Here Topalov missed a way to muddy the waters with 15...♘xd3 16.cxd3 b4 17.♘e2 ♘c5!, and (don't ask me why) the computer assesses this position as quite playable for Black.

16.♖hf1 ♗g7 17.f5 ♘e5

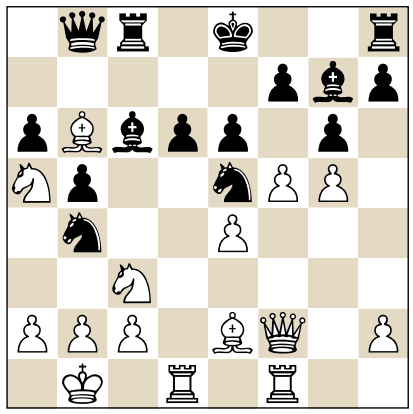
As usual in the Sicilian, it is not easy to break Black's position, and he always has some tricks, but objectively speaking it is clear that White has a considerable advantage.



18.♗b6 ♕d7 It was possible to eliminate White's light-squared bishop with 18...♘bxd3 19.cxd3 ♕d7, but here White has many options, the most straightforward of which is 20.f6 ♗f8 21.d4 ♘c4 22.d5, and this position looks pretty bad for Black.

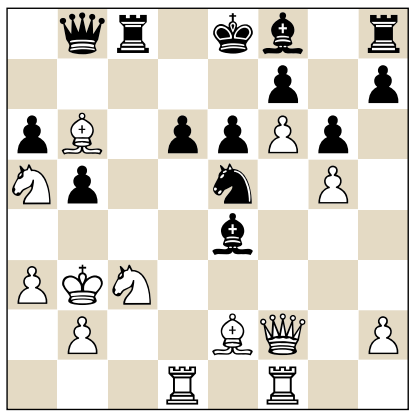
19.♗e2! I am trying to trap the knight on b4 and there are also threats like ♗c5. In a classical game, Black's position would be quite critical already, but in blindfold with about 10 minutes on the clock for each of us, it's completely playable.

19...♕b7 20.♘a5 ♕b8



21.f6 The computer points out 21.a3 ♘xc2 22.♖c1 as very strong, but what I played was also good.

21...♗f8 22.a3 ♘xc2 23.♔xc2 ♗xe4+ 24.♔b3

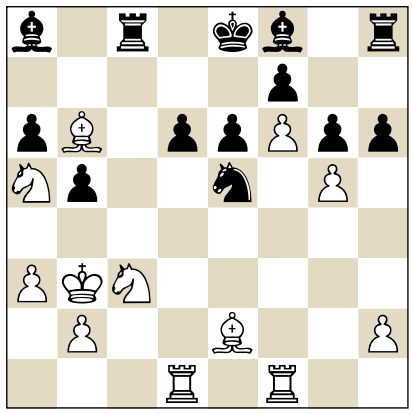


24...♗a8

Maybe 24...♖xc3+ was a good practical try. White is still better after 25.♔xc3 ♘d7, and now the very precise 26.♗f3, when White keeps an advantage, but the situation is still tense for a blindfold game.

25.♗a7 ♕c7 26.♕b6 ♕xb6 27.♗xb6 h6

This is the most logical move, but it's probably the decisive mistake. Objectively speaking, Black should have gone for 27...♘d7 28.♗f2 h6 29.h4, when with two pawns and some play for the piece Black is clearly worse, but White is not yet winning.

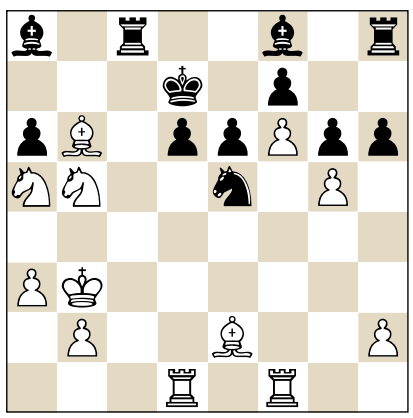


28.♘xb5!

The most logical and correct way to proceed.

28...♔d7

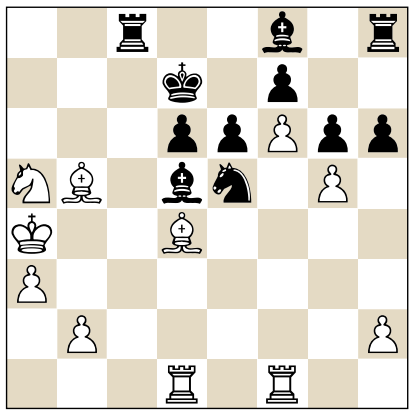
28...axb5 loses pretty trivially to 29.♗xb5+ ♘d7 30.♖c1, and White will mate (30...♗d5+ 31.♔a4 ♖b8 32.♖c7).



29.♗d4

The most forcing continuation. From here I already calculated almost till the end of the game, because otherwise White has simple moves like 29.♘c3 ♖b8 30.♘a4, keeping the advantage; but the situation is still tense.

29...♗d5+ 30.♔a4 axb5+ 31.♗xb5+



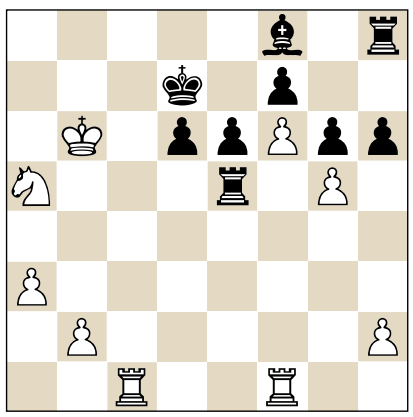
31...♗c6

31...♔c7 loses after 32.♖c1+ ♔b8 33.♖xc8+ ♔xc8 34.♖c1+ ♔b8 35.♗a6 and mate will follow soon.

Best was 31...♘c6, but it doesn't offer full relief, since White is practically winning after 32.♗g1 hxg5 33.♖xd5 exd5 34.♖c1 ♖h4+ 35.b4, as now 35...♖c4 36.♘xc4 dxc4 37.♗xc4 ♘e5 38.♗b5+ leaves Black with a hopeless position.

Now Black would be fine if it wasn't for the beautiful combination that starts now:

32.♗xe5! ♗xb5+ 33.♔xb5 ♖c5+ 34.♔b6 ♖xe5 35.♖c1



It's all about tempi. If Black manages to get out with his pieces, he would simply be better.

35...♖xa5

NEW IN CHESS

In 2007, after he had had to skip the 2006 edition because of illness, Vladimir Kramnik made a glorious come-back by claiming his sixth Amber title. A good moment to celebrate with his wife Marie-Laure.

SAVE 10%
ON
CHESS PATTERN RECOGNITION
– COMPLETE –

"Every ambitious player should at least make sure that he knows all motifs that 'Chess Pattern Recognition' presents."
Harry Schaack, KARL Chess Magazine

"Gives you the very pleasant feeling of learning new things without spending too much effort!"
GM Matthew Sadler

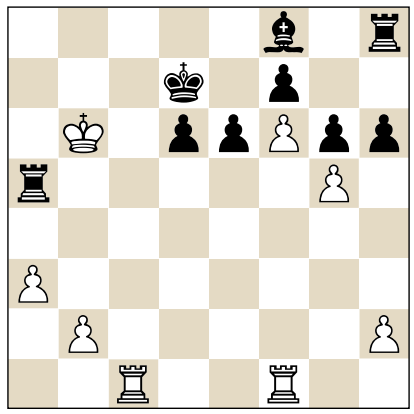
"Once you have stored a lot of patterns, finding the best or most interesting move at the board will take less time. The (unintentional?) side-effect of the book is: a snapshot of moderns chess at the highest level."
IM Frank Zeller, SCHACH Magazine

"There is no question but that this will improve the positional understanding of many club players. I'd highly recommend this to players rated around 1400 to 2100, and I think even masters can (and will) learn something from this book as well."
Dennis Monokroussos, The Chess Mind

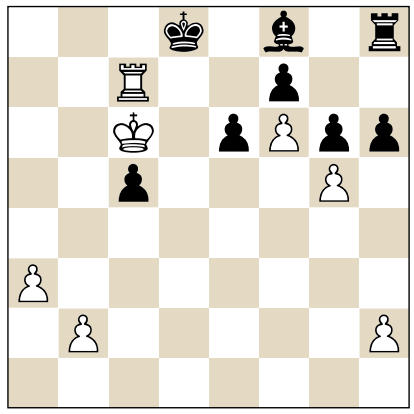
Chess Pattern Recognition Complete, 560 pages for only €39.95 (from €45.90)

available at your local (chess)bookseller or at www.newinchess.com

Aimed against the threat of ♖c7+. Now Topalov was probably only counting on 36.♔xa5, when after 36...d5, the situation would be not so clear. But White has something better.



36.♖c7+! This is one of the most beautiful combinations I have made in my chess career.
36...♔d8 37.♖fc1 ♖c5 What I liked especially is that now, after 37...♖a8, White has 38.♔b7!. A most remarkable way of trapping the rook on a8. It is quite common that the rook gets trapped on a8 by a pawn on b7 or a bishop or a queen, but this was the first time that I saw it trapped by a king.
38.♖1xc5 dxc5 39.♔c6!!



I remember that when I saw this move I felt my heart beating; I was so enthusiastic. In fact, it's a mate in three, but without checks. With this quiet move I simply threaten 40.♖a7 and 41.♖a8 mate. And Black can do nothing about it. So here Veselin resigned.
The sacrifice on b5 and the king march resulting in this finish gave me a lot of satisfaction. And the reader has to remember when replaying this game, that as we played these moves we saw neither board nor pieces.

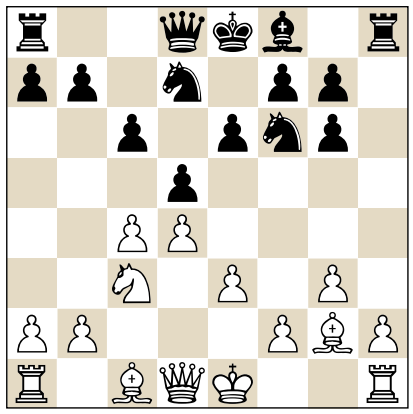
Levon Aronian

'The Amber tournament will always stay in my memory as one of the finest events I ever played in. Thanks to Van Oosterom's generosity I got to enjoy the best hotels in Monaco and Nice and show the beauty of the South of France to my friends and to my parents. I even learned to swim during one of the events! Some of the best memories are connected with the ever active Ljubomir Ljubojevic and his analysis after each game. I remember a game I had with Wang Yue, in Nice in 2009, in which there was an endgame where I had two bishops against his two knights which I managed to win without big problems. After the game had finished Ljubo showed me how I actually had been in danger of losing because of some ingenious play with the knights! This was a real revelation.
And I remember Viktor Kortchnoi's laughter at the last Amber tournament in 2011 in Monaco, when he paid special attention to people making silly mistakes. He was very funny. I played a game with Carlsen, a symmetrical Grünfeld, and for some strange reason I played ...a6 which was followed by ...♖a7. I was in trouble, but the game finished in a draw. Viktor congratulated me on finding such a "marvellous" idea and for quite some time was asking me if I had prepared it at home. Unfortunately I never got to converse much with Mr Van Oosterom, but I remember that he loved watching the games and especially liked it when something tactical and messy was on the board. To many of us he showed how a dream chess life would be. May his good deeds bring joy to his children.'

NOTES BY
Levon Aronian

Levon Aronian
Viswanathan Anand
Monte Carlo Amber blindfold 2007
Slav Defence

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.e3 ♗f5 5.♘c3 e6 6.♘h4 ♗g6 7.♘xg6 hxg6 8.g3 ♘bd7 9.♗g2



An old-fashioned method of playing this position, which I sometimes employ.

9...dxc4 10.♕e2 ♗e7

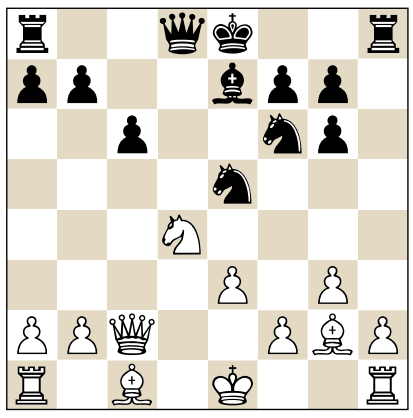
Two months later in our rapid match in Yerevan, Kramnik played 10...♘b6 and obtained a good position. For me Vladimir has always been like an expert valuer. If after a first game with him an idea survives, it means that it is of high quality.

11.♕xc4 e5 12.♘e2

If 12.0-0 I did not like the fact that after 12...exd4 13.♕xd4 ♕a5 Black has all sorts of tricks involving ...♖d8, ...♕h5 and jumps by his knight.

12...exd4 The most logical. Black activates his game, exploiting the fact that White has not castled.

13.♘xd4 ♘e5 14.♕c2

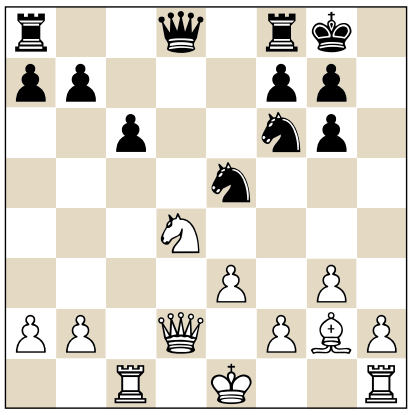


14...♗b4+ The simplest. The active 14...c5, which so appeals to our senior brethren, leads to over-complicated play. For example, one of the silicon lines is 15.♘b3 ♘d3+ 16.♔e2 ♘e5, with an optimistic assessment for Black.

15.♗d2 ♗xd2+ 16.♕xd2 0-0

Here 16...c5 is also possible, and it leads to open play after 17.♘b5, but usually in blindfold games people play as solidly as possible.

17.♖c1



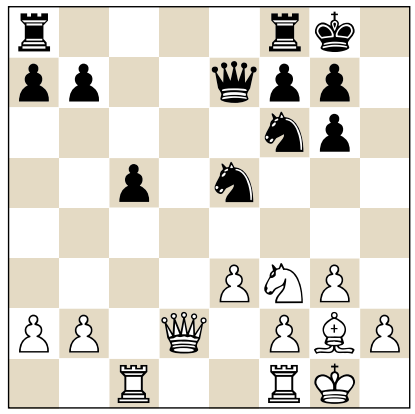
The position has taken on the outlines of the Lasker Variation in the Queen's Gambit. White retains merely a symbolic advantage.

17...♕e7 18.0-0 c5

A solid move leading to equality.

19.♘f3

After any other moves Black has the simple reply ...♖ad8 and ...b6, and the attempt to prevent this set-up by 19.♘b5 ♖ad8 20.♕a5 does not lead anywhere after 20...♘d3 21.♖c2 a6 22.♘c3 ♖d6, with a good game for Black thanks to his excellent knight on d3.



19...♖fd8 The start of an incorrect plan. 19...♘xf3+ 20.♗xf3 ♖ad8 and ...b6 leads to a situation which occurs in Closed Games. It is seemingly more pleasant playing White; he has a bishop, but there is nothing for this

NEW IN CHESS

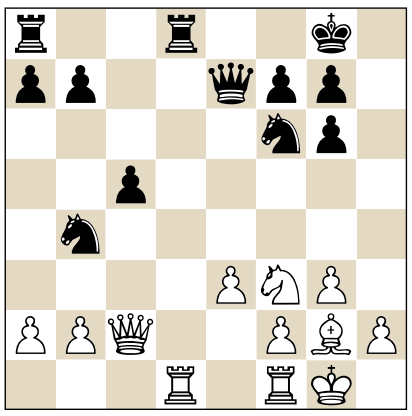
Several times Levon Aronian came to the Cote d'Azur with his parents. As he did when he won the last Amber tournament in 2011.

bishop to attack, and things usually end in a draw.

20.♕c2 ♘d3

An incorrect move. After 20...♘xf3+ 21.♗xf3 ♖ac8 Black could have gone into a slightly inferior version of the position after 19...♘xf3+, but my opponent probably wanted more active play.

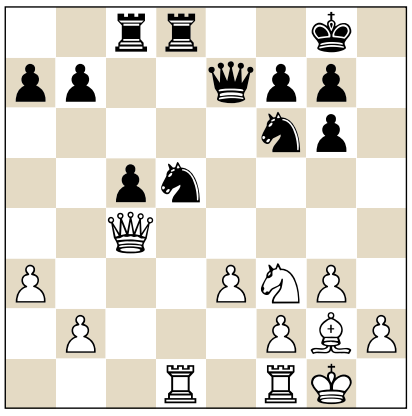
21.♖cd1 ♘b4



22.♕b3 Here 22.♕c4 was stronger, but I thought that it was not bad to have the b7-pawn in my sights.

22...♖ac8 23.a3 ♘bd5 If 23...♘c6, then 24.♘g5 is unpleasant.

24.♕c4



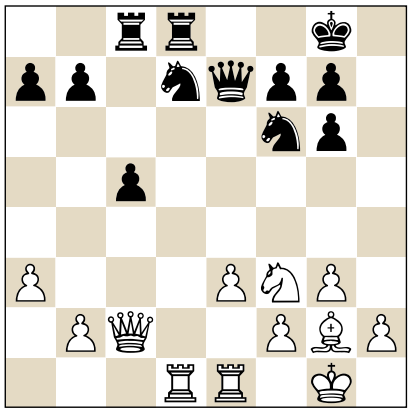
Here I decided to frighten Vishy with the threat of ♕h4 and ♘g5. Other, more solid moves, such as 24.♖fe1 or 24.h4, were probably stronger.

24...♘b6 25.♕c2

After 25.♕h4 ♕e4 the queens would have been exchanged, and so White changes plan.

25...♘bd7 26.♖fe1

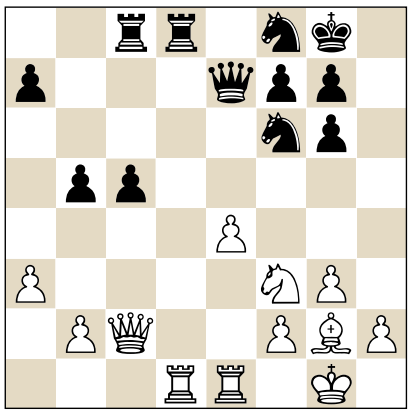
I remember that I was especially proud of this move. I like slow moves, and I believe that when I make such a move, I pay tribute to Petrosian, and I find this pleasant.



26...b5

Black should have fought against the e4 advance by 26...♘e4, although the position after the possible 27.♗h3 ♖c7 28.♖d5 ♘ef6 29.♖d3 is better for White.

27.e4 ♘f8 27...♘e5 would not have eased the position; after 28.♘xe5 ♕xe5 29.f4 White dominates.

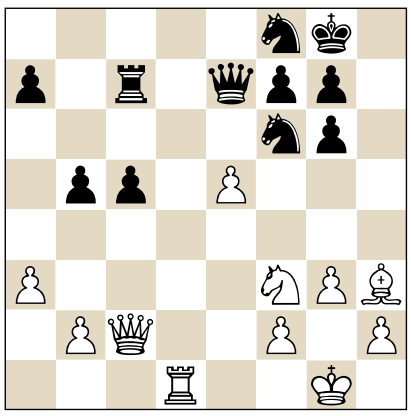


28.♗h3 This move is very important. The hanging state of the c5-pawn does not allow Black to play 28...♘e6 because of 29.♗xe6 ♕xe6 30.♖xd8 ♖xd8 31.♕xc5, and this means that the position becomes bad for him.

28...♖xd1 29.♖xd1 ♖c7

After 29...♖d8 30.♖xd8 ♕xd8 31.♕xc5 ♘xe4 32.♕xa7, White is a sound pawn to the good.

30.e5

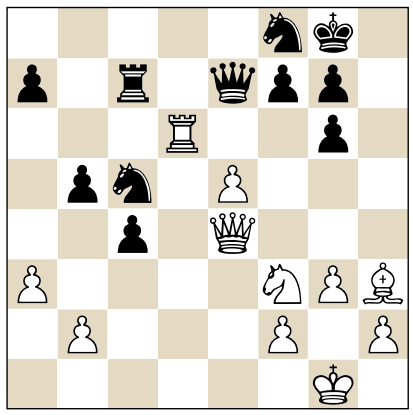


White's play is simple; because of the pitiful position of the knight on f8, the difference in activity must be decisive.

30...♘6d7 31.♕e4 c4 32.♖d6

Creating a bridgehead for the move ♕d5, with an attack on the b5-pawn and the threat of the e6 breakthrough.

32...♘c5



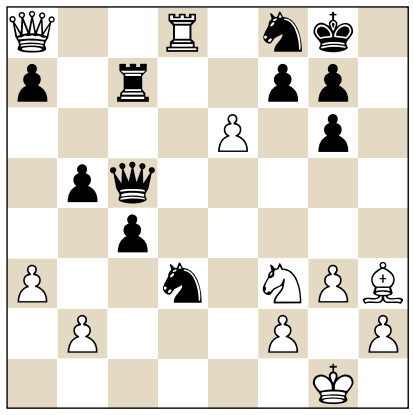
Black throws caution to the winds, but passive defence also did not promise much.

33.♕a8

After calculating the variation and convincing myself that I was not making any blunders typical of blindfold play, I decided to choose the most direct path.

33...♘d3 34.♖d8 ♕c5 35.e6

White's threats do not allow Black to begin a counterattack.



35...♘xf2

After 35...♕xf2+ 36.♔h1 ♕c5 the simplest way to decide matters is 37.exf7+ ♖xf7 38.♗e6.

36.exf7+ ♔xf7 36...♖xf7 loses to 37.♗e6. **37.♖xf8+ ♕xf8 38.♘e5+** Now Black loses his queen, and so Vishy resigned.

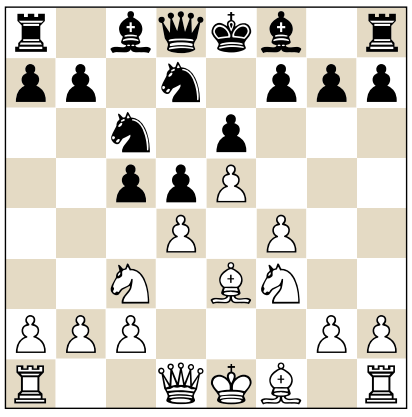
Alexander Morozevich

The Amber tournaments in Monaco are a special, incomparable page of my chess life. To create a warm, friendly atmosphere at an elite tournament is not the easiest task. At the 'Amber' tournaments it was invariable. Altogether I had the good fortune to participate in the eight tournaments from 2002 to 2009. The most successful were the first five tournaments, in which I was three times the winner – in 2002 on my own, in 2004 and 2006 in a share, and in two others I finished in the top three. In my first appearance the greatest anxiety was associated with blindfold play. Of course, throughout his professional development every player trains in himself this skill, but it is one matter to solve problems in your head at a tedious school lesson, or battle with friends in a long-distance train, where the loser has to go for the tea, and quite another to contest eleven games against the best players in the world with a lack of even minimal tournament experience. The 9 out of 11 which I scored straight off instilled in me such confidence that, consciously or not, in all subsequent years I pinned my hopes on the blindfold play, and this hardly ever let me down.
Each of the tournaments certainly left a vivid trace in my memory, and to choose 'the one' most memorable game out of all those played does not seem possible. My encounters with Vishy Anand perhaps stand apart – in most of them there was an exceptionally sharp and interesting battle, important theoretical novelties, tactical skirmishes, and fantastic positions – chess fans will find everything in them! The rapidplay score 3-4 in Vishy's favour is something that I definitely consider an achievement on my part, although 6½-½ in blindfold also does not look too bad. It will be most logical to annotate our only drawn game.

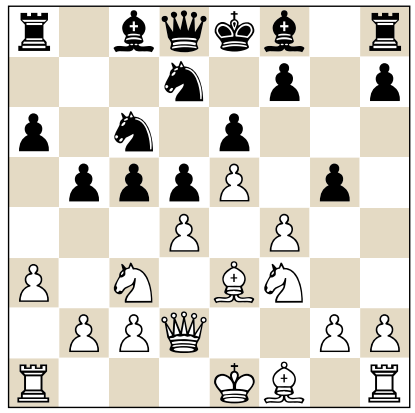
NOTES BY
Alexander Morozevich

Vishy Anand
Alexander Morozevich
Monaco blindfold 2005
French, Steinitz Variation

1.e4 e6
The French Defence is my most frequent choice against Vishy's 1.e4. Now it seems strange, but in my youth I believed in my openings!
2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3



7...a6 In different years I have tried all the systems for Black (excluding the transition into an endgame after 7...cxd4 8.♘xd4 ♗c5 9.♕d2 ♘xd4 10.♗xd4 ♗xd4 11.♕xd4 ♕b6, but I also prepared this for Zhu Chen when working in Qatar in 2011), but up till now without understanding which of them is the most correct. The range of perceptions varied from everything is acceptable to everything is bad, but the truth is most probably somewhere in the middle. But to think about why is something that should have been done not now, but around the first move ☺.
8.♕d2 b5
Black's main hope in this variation is that White's choice is too broad.
9.a3 g5



The opening dinner of the 2008 edition was held in the splendid Salon Louis XIV of the legendary Negresco Hotel in Nice.

A novelty at high level! The move is quite typical for most French Defence structures, but its drawbacks are also obvious – the price for undermining the white centre will be the lack of any safe shelter for the black king. And the most important question: is it in general worth conceding the centre (1...e6?!), in order to then attack it at such a price? I found this idea two months earlier in Wijk aan Zee when preparing for my last round game with Vladimir Kramnik. The analysis dragged on until six in the morning, but by day break I decided that my eyes had rather glazed over, and that it would be better to improvise. The result was impromptu play in the form of 1...d6, which surprised me, and I think my opponent and most of the spectators. Of course, I wanted to test the new idea in practice, and, fortunately, I did not have to wait long for a new opportunity.

10.fxg5

The acceptance of a gambit is always one of the most principled continuations.

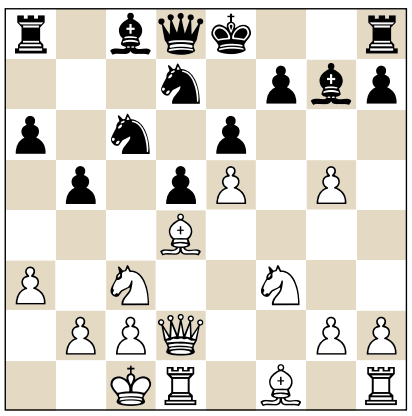
10...cxd4 11.♗xd4

I considered 11.♘xd4 to be the main capture, and subsequently in practice it occurred most often. Alexander Khalifman's book promises White an advantage in all variations.

11...♗g7

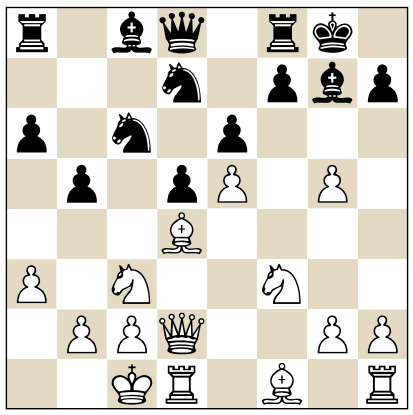
Black hurries to castle, but whether things will be calmer for his king on g8 is not clear. 11...♕a5 with the idea of ...b5-b4 was interesting.

12.0-0-0



12...0-0?!

A bold move or a crazy one – take your pick. 12...♕a5 was still topical, but even the simple 12...♘xd4 13.♕xd4 ♖b8 was sounder than the game continuation. Vishy's next decision was surprising, and even in retrospect I find it hard to picture the chain of deductions that led him to make such a choice.



13.♘a2?

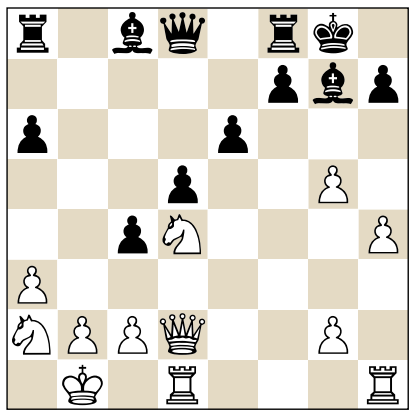
I would not assert that it would have been stronger to pass, but objectively White had a whole range of promising continuations – 13.♕f4, 13.♖e1 and 13.♔b1. In every case it would not be easy for Black to justify his escapade.

The voluntary banishment of the knight to a2 not only puts it out of play, but also allows **13...♘xd4 14.♘xd4 ♘xe5** and Black has captured the central pawn in comfort. Some positions were assessed by Bobby Fischer in his comments as 'the rest is a crunch of gravel underfoot', and this coincides with the sensation with which at that moment I looked at the position. I remembered perfectly well that tenacity and resourcefulness in defence were among Vishy's strongest qualities, and that I should concentrate fully and not relax. However, the arguments of reason are one thing, and it was another to perceive the concrete position, in the resourcefulness of which it was hard to believe.

15.h4

White's only chance is to create something against the black king.

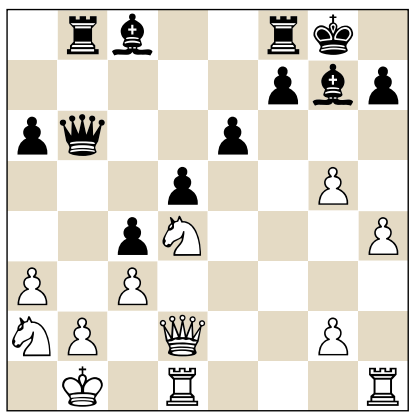
15...♘c4 16.♗xc4 bxc4 17.♔b1



White's position is rather cheerless, of course, but Black has to find a way of including his light-squared bishop in the play. During the game I thought that this 'problem' would be solved of its own accord, but it all turned out to be not so simple. Now 17...♕c7!? was stronger than the move in the game. After 18.g4 Black would have to decide on the non-trivial exchange 18...♗xd4 19.♕xd4 e5 and after 20.♕f2 d4, taking account of the reservist on a2, he is the first to create real threats. 20.♕xd5 ♗b7 21.♕d2 ♗xh1 22.♖xh1 leads to an objectively winning position, but in a practical game there is still much play.

17...♖b8 18.c3 ♕b6

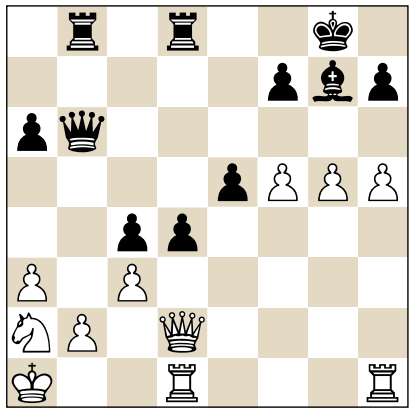
After 18...♕d6 19.g4 ♕xa3 20.♘b4 it is hard to assess the advisability of 20...♖xb4, while 20...♕a4 21.h5 leads to an overly tactical position, with risk, including for Black.



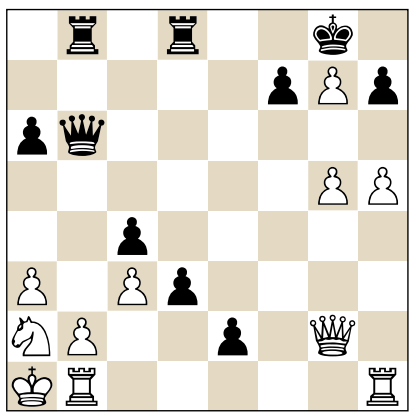
19.g4

The only way of parrying ...e6-e5. It was only at this point that I realized what the real assessment of the position was, and a seaside walk with the afore-mentioned crunch was replaced by the image of a brutal boxing ring.

19...♖d8 A useful move, preparing ...e6-e5. **20.♔a1 e5 21.♘f5 ♗xf5** Not what the engines advise, but the knight on f5 cannot be tolerated, and it is terrifying to give up the g7-bishop, so I took on f5 without hesitation.
22.gxf5 d4 23.h5



It is not easy to give an accurate evaluation of events even after a detailed home analysis. In the game Black simply pushes forward.
23...e4 24.f6 e3 25.♕g2!
Vishy is again equal to the task. Here the queen occupies the most multifunctional square. At this point I did not even consider retreating the bishop, since to allow the capture of my d-pawn would be at the least an aesthetic offence. With a joyful cry the pawn advanced.
25...d3 26.fxg7 e2 27.♖b1

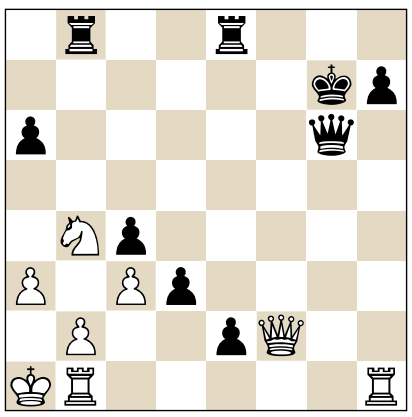


It appears that the pawns are about to decide matters and all that remains is to gently but accurately break down the gates, but the weak black king and the whole extra knight standing on a2 make Black's task unrealizable in a practical game.
27...♖e8 28.g6 fxg6 29.♘b4!

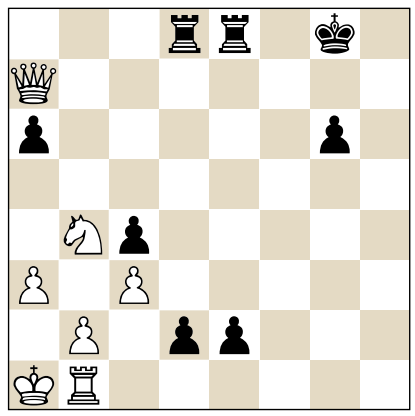
NEW IN CHESS

The blindfold games were played on laptops with empty boards on which the players executed their moves. At his debut in 2002 Alexander Morozevich showed remarkable talent for this unusual discipline as he scored an unbelievable 9 from 11.

At just the right time. The return of the knight from exile makes the amount of calculating work unbearable, and so instead of it intuition and instinct come to the fore, and the very first instinct is to capture something.
29...♔xg7 The computer only suggests that fencing with the white queen for the key squares by 29...♕b7 gives Black some advantage, understandable only to itself. Such a move may be guessed, or it may not.
30.hxg6 ♕xg6 31.♕f2



31...♖bd8! Cool-headed and already the only move. Black's pawns are ready to promote to new queens, and for this he does not begrudge giving up his old one.
32.♖hg1
A practical and wise decision. Moving the knight into the centre by 32.♘c6 ♖d6 33.♘d4 ♖f6 34.♕h4 ♔h8 would have maintained the high intensity of the battle and created a position that would be difficult to play for both opponents. I don't remember how much time we had left, and obviously White had already suffered enough.
32...d2 33.♕a7+ ♔g8 34.♖xg6+ hxg6



35.♕b6 Neither side can avoid perpetual check, and after **35...e1♕ 36.♕xg6+ ♔f8 37.♕f6+ ♔g8 38.♕g6+** a draw was agreed. ■

SHARJAH

A Grand Prix lacking speed

Grischuk declared winner as three tie for first in cautious Sharjah GP

'Gens circumspecta sumus' seemed to be the motto of the Grand Prix in Sharjah, the first of a cycle of four tournaments that will decide on two coveted spots in the 2018 Candidates tournament. In the end, a modest plus-2 score brought three contestants 140 precious GP points. One of them was our reporter, **MAXIME VACHIER-LAGRAVE**.

MAX AVDEV

With the new year come the resolutions, and number one on my list was to qualify for next year's Candidates tournament. And so, when the new FIDE Grand Prix cycle was finally announced at the end of last year, a few months late, I decided to give it a go, notwithstanding an already fully packed year, including the Grand Chess Tour cycle. The reasoning was simple. This seems to be my best chance to obtain one of the coveted eight spots in the Candidates, two of which are given to the two top finishers in the overall standings of the Grand Prix.

Not everyone followed my example. With the GP prize-fund being quite low, especially for elite standards these days, Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So and Vladimir Kramnik decided to skip the Grand Prix cycle. They all have good chances to qualify for the Candidates thanks to their high ratings and took the gamble. Yet, if none of them goes on to reach the World Cup final (the two finalists in the World Cup in Tbilisi this September also get a spot in the Candidates) – and that never is an easy task – one of these three could be excluded from the Candidates.

But let's move on to the Grand Prix itself. The cycle again consists of four tournaments spread over the year and is organized by Agon. The four venues are Sharjah, Moscow, Geneva and Mallorca. All participants will play three of these four, but the difference with last cycle is the format of each tournament, which is designed to welcome more players into the mix. As a result, 24 players are in competition for the two Candidates spots that are decided in nine-round Swiss events of 18 players each, an interesting and untested new format.

It nevertheless raised a few eyebrows among players and arbiters all over the world, the main concern being the difficulty of getting coherent pairings towards the end of the tournament, while respecting some equity in the White/Black ratio of each player. It has to be mentioned that one of the main reasons for Agon for this change is their desire to award more wildcard spots (a whopping 10), and unfortunately this happened at the expense of a lot of deserving players. To my knowledge there are eight 2720+ players who didn't decline their invitations, but are not included in the list, while only three of the 10 wildcards are in that rating zone. That said, the final field remains fairly balanced, and there won't be any easy games. On the eve of the Sharjah GP, I predicted that +3 would most probably be good

'With the GP prize-fund being quite low, Fabiano Caruana, Wesley So and Vladimir Kramnik decided to skip the Grand Prix cycle.'

Yes, it's for real! The Sharjah Cultural and Chess Club , the venue of the first Grand Prix of the year, is doubtlessly one of the most impressive chess clubs in the world.

enough for first place, and said that I would be very satisfied if I produced such a score.

Sharjah is one of the seven Emirates of the United Arab Emirates, close to Dubai, but far more conservative and religious. The hotel we stayed in was comfortable, but it was located next to Sharjah airport, which meant that there were no restaurants – or anything else for that matter – to go to. As a result, I ate at the same place every day for 10 days. Fortunately, the food was of good enough quality to make this inconvenience bearable.

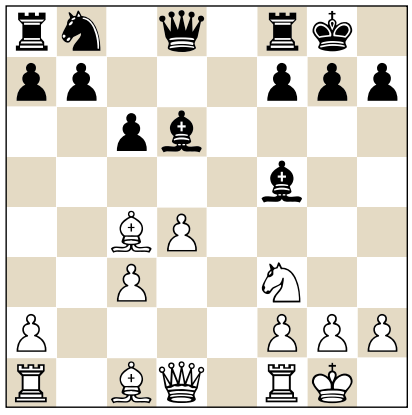
In general, both the local organizers and the Agon staff on site tried their best to accommodate the players, and the inevitable boredom of staying in the hotel all the time was easily overcome by the stakes. The tournament hall was in the Sharjah Chess Club, easily one of the top-3 chess clubs that I've ever visited, in terms of both space and luxury, and offered ideal playing conditions.

My first game, against Li Chao with White, turned out to be a double-edged Petroff(!) and was what I consider my finest effort in Sharjah.

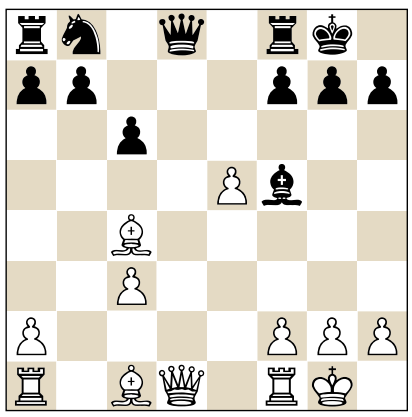
NOTES BY
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Li Chao
Sharjah 2017 (1)
Petroff, Marshall Variation

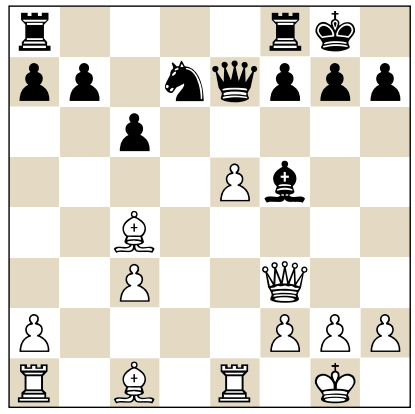
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♗d3 ♗d6
Here 6...♘c6 7.0-0 ♗e7 has been virtually Li Chao's only choice up to now and definitely how I expected him to proceed.
7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.♘c3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♗f5
Fortunately, I had also taken a look at this position a few months back and found an interesting idea.



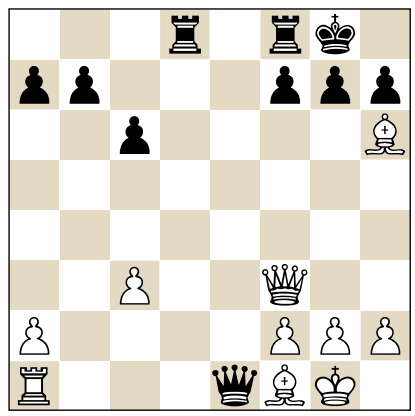
12.♘e5 An interesting idea I had mostly designed to get my opponent out of his preparation. It worked perfectly in this game.
12.♖e1 ♘d7 13.♗g5 was played in Bacrot-Bogner, in the 2016 London Open. Needless to say, the French guys had a debriefing in the neighbouring pub after the games were finished, so I was well aware of the subtleties of the position, especially after Black's correct answer 13...♕a5!.
12.♗g5 was tried later on by Ian Nepomniachtchi against the same Li Chao, with an even more successful outcome (see further on in this report). But obviously the Chinese player didn't reply correctly in that game.
12...♗xe5
12...♘d7 13.f4 would lead to sharp play: 13...♘f6 14.g4!?. And, instead of 13.f4, 13.♕f3!? would also be an interesting option, giving decent play after, for instance, 13...♗e6 14.♗xe6 fxe6 15.♕g4 ♖f5 16.♘c4.
13.dxe5



13...♕e7
Not the right approach. Black should exchange queens in a favourable way, and that he can do with the following sequence: 13...♘d7 14.♖e1 ♖e8 15.f4 ♘c5! 16.♗e3 ♕xd1 17.♖axd1 ♘a4, and Black gets his counterplay in time. After 18.♖c1 ♘b2 19.♗e2 ♘d3 the position is very drawish.
14.♖e1
14.♕h5!? didn't really cross my mind, as I was very happy with the sequence that happened in the game – perhaps wrongly, since after 14...♗g6 15.♕e2 ♘d7 16.f4 White is clearly on top.
14...♕xe5?! is dubious: 15.♗a3 g6 16.♕g5, while after 14...g6!? 15.♕h6 ♘d7 16.♗e3! White has a good initiative.
14...♘d7 15.♕f3



15...g6! Psychologically a difficult move to make, but it is a very good one, keeping some sort of balance in the game.
The critical line to investigate was 15...♘xe5 16.♕xf5 ♘f3+ 17.♕xf3 ♕xe1+ 18.♗f1, and here Li Chao showed a great line in the post-game analysis: 18...♖ad8 (18...♖fe8 19.c4 ♖ad8 20.♗b2 would allow White to regroup successfully) 19.♗h6!!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

(I intended 19.♗b2 ♕d2 20.♗a3 ♖fe8 21.♗c5, which is enough for an advantage, but not as convincing

MAX AVDEV

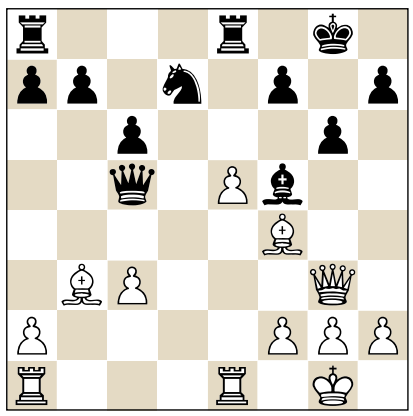
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave's win against Li Chao in the first round was the Frenchman's finest effort in Sharjah.

nor as beautiful as Li Chao's way of proceeding), as 19...♕xa1 20.♕g3 g6 21.♕e5 f6 22.♕e7 would just end in mate.

Further alternatives to the text-move were 15...♗g6 16.e6 ♔h8 17.♗a3! ♕xa3 18.exd7, and White is already close to winning, since the pawn on d7 is impossible to get rid of.

And 15...♗e6 16.♗d3, which would only help White, especially as ...g6 will be forced at some point.

16.♕g3 ♖fe8 17.♗f4 ♕c5 18.♗b3



18...a5! Again a great decision by Li Chao, since he needs to challenge me on the queenside. Otherwise, I'll gradually and methodically increase pressure on the kingside, where Black will be doomed in the long term.

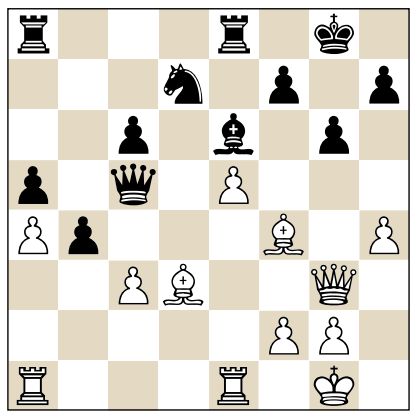
19.a4 b5 20.h4 ♗e6 21.♗c2?!

I got attracted to this option, but in the end it sharpened the play too much to my taste.

My original intention 21.♗xe6 ♖xe6 22.♖ad1 ♘f8 didn't promise anything, since the rook on e6 is a great added value for Black's defensive set-up.

But 21.♗d1 still promised Black a difficult day at the office. I'm losing a tempo, but preventing ...b4 turns out to be more important.

21...b4 22.♗d3!?

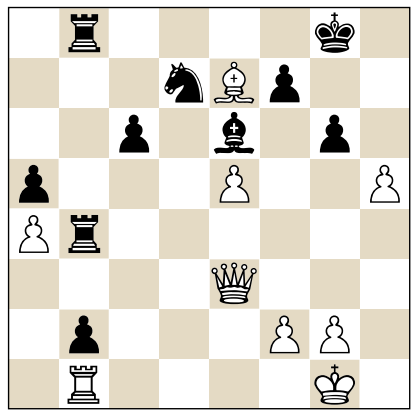


22...b3

22...♕xc3!? 23.♖ac1 ♕a3 24.h5 was my intention. It actually turns out that Black is now doing more than fine after 24...♗f5! 25.♗xf5 ♕xg3 26.♗xg3 gxf5 27.♖xc6 ♖ec8, and Black might even be winning! But of course, getting the queen so much out of play, even temporarily, is not to everyone's taste.

23.h5 ♘f8!

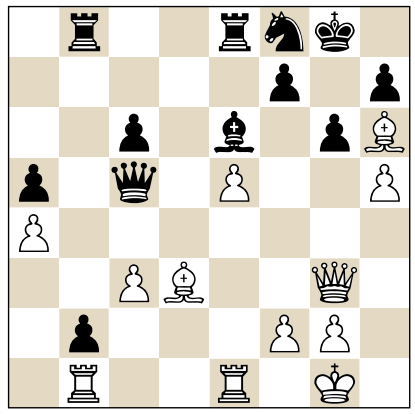
23...b2?! is a hasty move, and after 24.♖ab1 ♕xc3 25.♖e3 ♘f8! 26.♗xg6 ♕c1+ 27.♖e1 ♕xe1+ 28.♖xe1 hxg6, while the pawn on b2 gives Black good counterchances, White's attack on the dark squares should prevail with accurate play, e.g: 29.♕c3 ♖ab8 30.♖b1 ♖b4 31.♗g5 ♖eb8 32.♕e3 ♘d7 33.♗e7!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The explanation for this move will come later (33.♗f6 ♘xf6 34.exf6 ♔h7 35.hxg6+ ♔xg6 would now be just fine for Black). 33...♖xa4 34.♗f6, with a decisive attack: 34...♖a1 (34...♘xf6 35.exf6 ♔h7 36.hxg6+ ♔xg6 37.♕g3+ wins the rook, which is the reason for playing the subtle 33.♗e7) 35.♕h6 ♘xf6 36.exf6 ♖xb1+ 37.♔h2 ♖h1+ 38.♔xh1 b1♕+ 39.♔h2, with unavoidable mate.

24.♗h6 b2 25.♖ab1 ♖ab8



And suddenly I wasn't sure at all about my attack. I still kept it going with:

Celeb 64

John Henderson

Viola Davis

Back in 2014, almost nobody paid any attention when two-time Academy nominated Viola Davis made a generous donation to the Central Falls High School in Rhode Island. The actress sent her hometown alma mater $60,000, with specific instructions for it to be split equally between the drama department and the chess club.

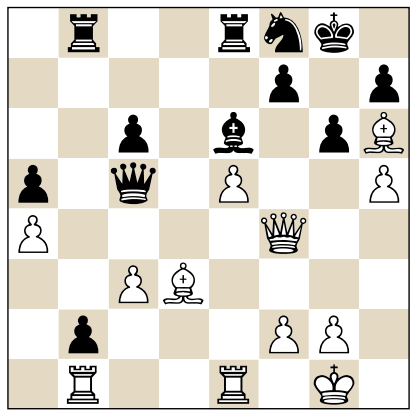
Davis said her reason for doing so was that these were the two areas she felt benefited her the most when a student there through the 1980s. She even went as far as admitting to enjoying success playing in national chess competitions for the school team.

This year, at the 88th Academy Awards in Hollywood, Davis found herself nominated yet again – only this time, it was indeed third-time lucky, as she finally won the Oscar for her sublime performance in Denzil Washington's *Fences*. And as the award ceremony unfolded, we couldn't fail to notice some further chess connections.

Firstly, one of the early Tinseltown hot tips for best supporting actress was Lupita Nyong'o, following her performance in *Queen of Katwe*, playing Ugandan chess prodigy Phiona Mutesi's screen mother – but, somewhat surprisingly, she didn't even make it onto the nomination list.

And when Davis was announced as the winner, to rapturous applause she went up to receive her little gold statue from another chess-playing celebrity, actor and playwright Mark Rylance. ■

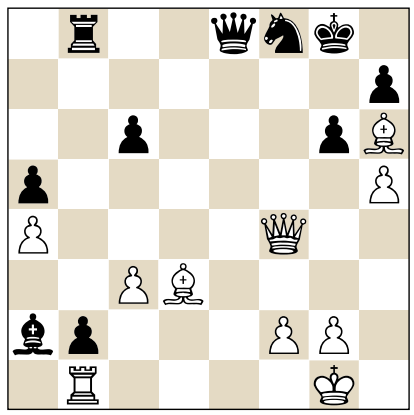
26.♕f4 A more reasonable approach would have been 26.♖e2! ♕xc3 27.♕g5 ♗a2 28.♕f6 ♘e6 29.hxg6 fxg6 30.♗xg6 ♖f8! (30...hxg6? 31.♕xg6+ ♔h8 32.♖bxb2 would be too dangerous and turns out to be completely winning for White: 32...♖xb2 33.♕xe8+ ♔h7 34.♖e3!, and Black is defenceless: 34...♕c1+ 35.♔h2 ♔xh6 36.♖h3+ ♔g7 37.♕h8+ ♔f7 38.♕f6+ ♔e8 39.♖h8+ ♔d7 40.♕f7 mate) 31.♗xf8 ♖xf8 32.♕e7 hxg6 33.♖exb2! ♕d3! 34.♖b7 g5 35.♖b8 ♕f5, with a likely draw.



26...♘d7 26...♗a2 was an issue, since 27.♕f6? ♘e6 28.hxg6 hxg6! 29.♗xg6 ♕e7! is just bad now, because White loses material instead of having the desired winning attack. 27.e6! was suddenly my backup plan, and luckily enough guarantees a draw after for instance 27...f5 28.♗xf8 ♖xf8 (28...♕xf8 29.♗c4!) 29.hxg6 ♗xb1 30.e7! ♗xd3 31.♕h6 hxg6 32.♕xg6+.

27...♘xe6?? 28.♖xe6.

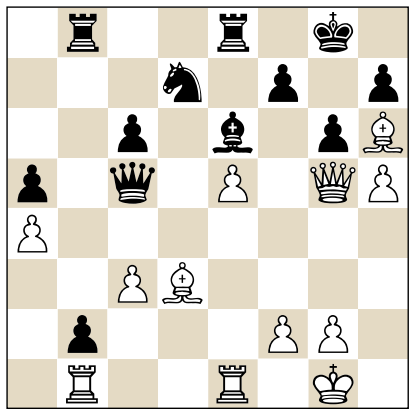
27...♕e7? 28.exf7+ ♕xf7 29.♖xe8! ♕xe8, and here



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30.♕d2!! gives White a large advantage. Black loses the pawn on b2, as 30...♗xb1? 31.♗c4+ ♘e6 32.♕d4 ♖b7 33.♗xe6+ ♕xe6 34.♕d8+ ♔f7 35.♕f8 is mate.

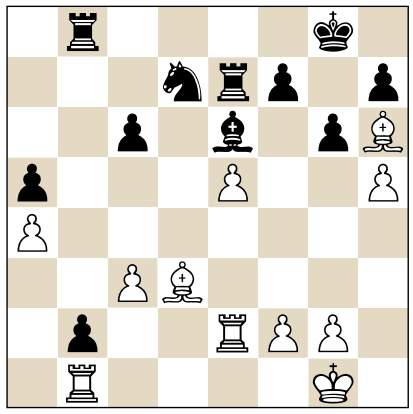
27.♕g5



27...♕e7! I was unsure how to proceed after 27...♔h8?!, but it turns out that I can now go 28.♕d2! ♘xe5 29.♗e3! (which makes a big difference compared to the position in which Black's king stays on g8) 29...♕d6 30.♗d4 f6 31.♗xg6!, and White is far better, since 31...hxg6 32.♕h6+ ♔g8 33.♖xe5 fxe5 34.♕xg6+ ♔f8 35.♕f6+ ♔g8 36.♗xe5 leads to a decisive attack.

28.♕xe7 ♖xe7 29.♖e2

Here I thought my position was practically winning, but I had completely overlooked Li Chao's response.

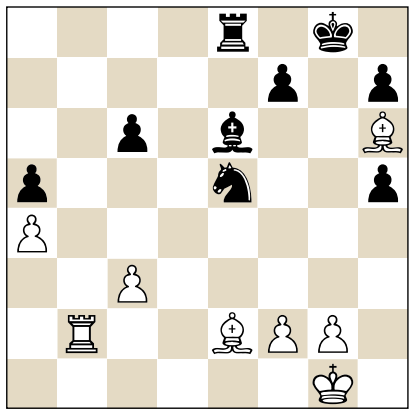


29...♖ee8!

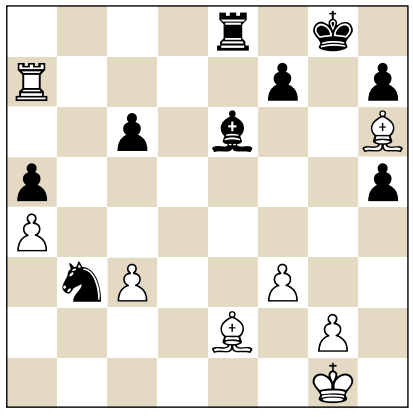
Now ...♘c5 is a threat, leaving me no choice but to allow Black to recapture the pawn with tempo.

Wrong was the immediate 29...♘c5?, because of 30.♖exb2, and Black's back rank problems would prove decisive.

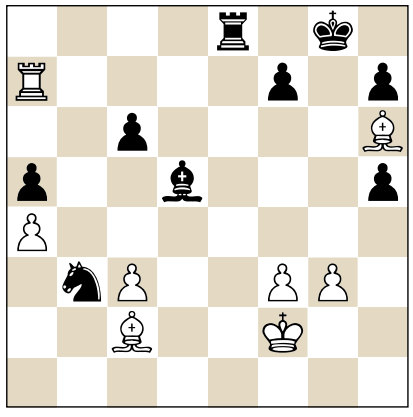
30.♖exb2 ♖xb2 31.♖xb2 ♘xe5 32.♗e2 gxh5!



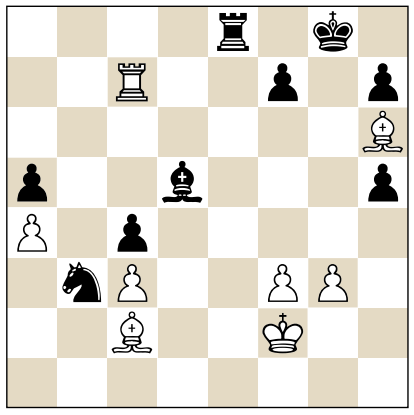
33.f3! The best try. 33.♗xh5?! ♗g4 34.♗xg4 ♘xg4 35.♗d2 ♖e2 would immediately lead to a draw.
33...♘d7?! Black goes wrong, missing an important tactical detail. 33...f6 34.♖b7 ♘f7 35.♗f4 ♗c8 would probably have been enough for a draw.
34.♖b7 ♘c5 35.♖a7 ♘b3 A sad necessity, since 35...♘xa4? 36.♖xa5 ♘xc3 37.♖g5+ ♔h8 38.♗g7+ would immediately decide the game.



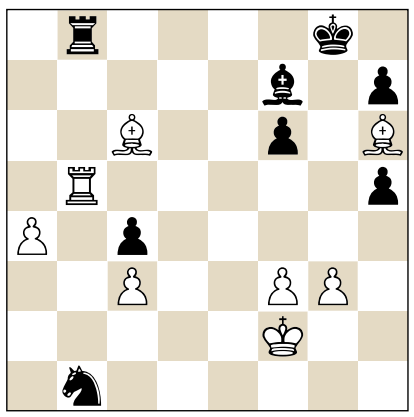
36.g3!? I decided to avoid any of Black's possible ...h4-h3 ideas. But at the same time, in some lines my king is now not safe from rook checks.
36...♗d5 37.♔f2 ♖b8 38.♗f1 ♗e6 39.♗d3
I juggled a bit, as Black can't really move. His bishop can move hither and thither aimlessly, but my rook controls both the knight (pawn a5) and the rook (8th rank), while my dark-squared bishop restricts the king. So I have time to wait for the time-control to make a follow-up plan.
39...♗d5 40.♗f5 ♖e8 41.♗c2
Finally I decide to swap the bishop to get pawn a5.



41...c5?!
This move makes my life easier, but Li Chao didn't want to wait passively and wasn't happy with the endgame after 41...♗c4 42.♗xb3 ♗xb3 43.♖xa5 f6 44.♖a7 ♗c4 45.♗e3 ♖b8 46.♗d4. This looks technically winning for White, since pawn a4 requires both the rook and the bishop's attention, while my king will be free to go have a picnic on the kingside. Of course it still requires some technical skills to convert the advantage successfully: 46...♖e8 47.f4! ♖e2+ 48.♔f3 ♖e6, and here 49.f5! should be good enough (but 49.a5?! would put the win in serious doubt after 49...c5! 50.♗xc5 ♖a6 51.♖xa6 ♗xa6 52.♔e4 ♗b7+ 53.♔d4 ♔f7 54.f5 ♔e8 55.♔c4 ♗e4).
42.♖c7! c4

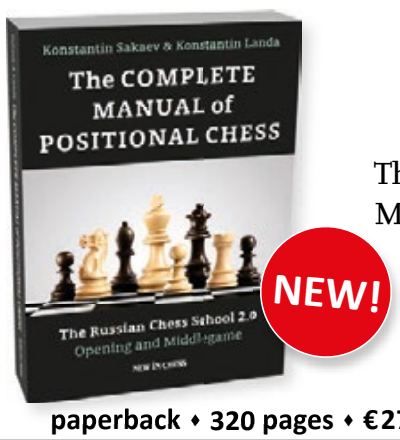


43.♗f5! Provoking ...c5-c4 turns out to have been a huge success for White, since Black no longer has the resource ...♘c5. **43...♖b8 44.♗d7 f6 45.♗b5** The rest is a matter of technique. **45...♗f7** 45...♖d8 runs into 46.♖xc4!. **46.♖c6! ♘a1 47.♖a6!** Making it easy and leaving Black with as little counterplay as possible. **47...♘c2 48.♖xa5 ♘a3 49.♗c6 ♘b1 50.♖b5**



The point, since Black will be unable to avoid the rook exchange, after which the passed pawn will inevitably queen. Black resigned.

■ ■ ■


Konstantin Sakaev & Konstantin Landa
The COMPLETE MANUAL of POSITIONAL CHESS
NEW!
The Russian Chess School 2.0
Opening and Middlegame

Probably the most thorough grounding in the history of teaching chess

This manual was recently created at the DYSS, the special sports school for young talents in Moscow. Sakaev and Landa present a complete set of instructions for trainers and self-improvers.

You are handed basic and advanced tools to improve in the areas that really matter. With its all-encompassing approach this ground-breaking book allows you to reap the fruits of the long tradition of instructive excellence in Russia.

paperback • 320 pages • €27.95 • available at your local (chess)bookseller or at newinchess.com • a NEW IN CHESS publication

In the other eight games only Michael Adams, in a nice effort against local player Saleh Salem, and Richard Rapport, against Ding Liren, managed to win. A total of only a third of the games ending in a decision should come as quite a surprise in the first round of a Swiss event, but of course this was not your usual Swiss tournament.

In Round 2, I was paired with Richard Rapport as Black, and to my delight he played the only line I had prepared, as I considered 1.b3 to be 'the most likely of all unlikely lines'. With Richard then avoiding what is considered to be the critical test of my reply 1...d5 2.♗b2 ♗g4 3.f3!? (he played 3.h3), I got off easy in the opening and even regarded my position as better. That may have been a tad too optimistic, but optimism is often rewarded in such situations and after a careless move by Richard I got the upper hand and never let go. Not even an untimely power outage in the middle of the game could stop me from hauling in my second win after 54 moves.

But there was no reason for great optimism yet. In the previous Grand Prix cycle, I had also won the first two games, causing me to think that the event was going to be a jog in the park, only to conclude that cycle with just one more win from the remaining 31 games I played! But these two wins still made me the sole leader after two rounds.

Round 3 was a draw fest, since Hikaru Nakamura was the only winner after breaking down Richard Rapport's Chigorin Defence. As for myself, in what was by far the most exciting of all my draws in Sharjah – and very possibly of all my games – I got in a lot of trouble against Shakh Mamedyarov after an opening experiment had completely backfired. Fortunately, I noticed a nice defensive try that muddied the waters enough for Shakh to misplay the position and for me to keep the lead.

In the fourth round, I faced Hikaru Nakamura with black – one of my hardest tests especially after my last encounter with him in my pet Najdorf in London didn't end well. This time, Hikaru went for 3.♗b5+, but he failed to upset the balance against my solid preparation. The draw we agreed on with only the queens gone may have been a bit premature, but the logical follow-up would undoubtedly have led to many more piece trades.

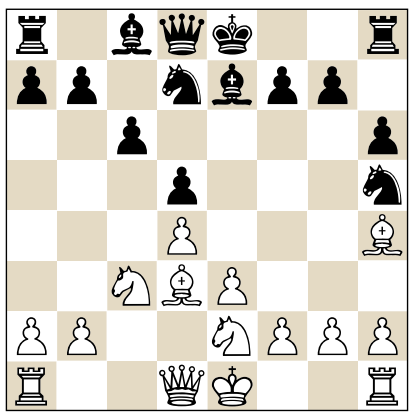
'As the Grand Prix is part of the World Championship cycle, the absence of the Sofia rules seems logical, but the damaging result was that many games ended prematurely.'

As the Grand Prix is part of the World Championship cycle, the absence of the Sofia rules seems logical (although I am not entirely sure it is), but the damaging result was that many more games ended prematurely, sometimes even earlier than ours.

Meanwhile, Shakh Mamedyarov joined the lead with an important win against Michael Adams' Queen's Gambit.

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Michael Adams
Sharjah 2017 (4)
Queen's Gambit Declined, Exchange Variation

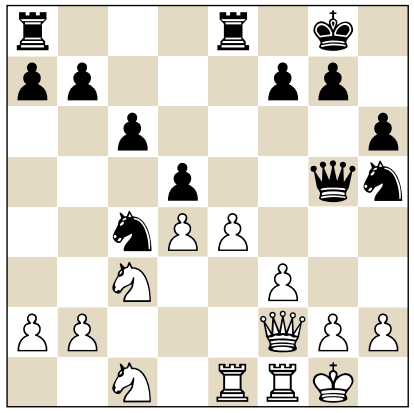
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 exd5 5.♗g5 c6 6.e3 h6 7.♗h4 ♗e7 8.♗d3 ♘bd7 9.♘ge2 ♘h5



This is one of the most solid lines against White's set-up if Black isn't keen on going for Nimzo-Indian lines. In general it leads to very passive play though, and while Michael has previously shown great expertise in this line, with specifically a nice win against Navara, one game I witnessed a few years back made me doubtful about Black's set-up.

10.♗xe7 ♕xe7 11.♕d2

The game I was referring to saw 11.0-0 0-0 12.♕d2 ♖e8 13.♖ae1 ♘b6 14.♘c1 ♕g5 15.f3 ♗f5 16.♗xf5 ♕xf5 17.e4 ♘c4 18.♕e2 ♕g5 19.♕f2.

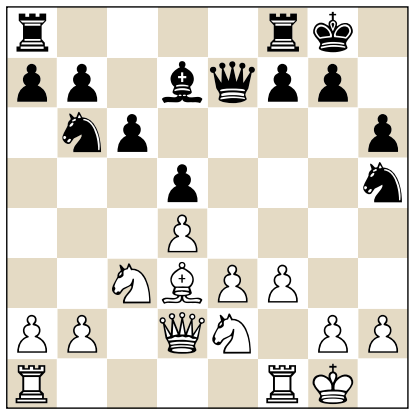


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I am not really sure whether everything had been forced up to here or whether this is objectively better for White, but in any case he has built an impressive pawn centre that is unopposed and creates serious practical problems for Black. In this game, Anish Giri managed to outplay my teammate in the French League, Laurent Fressinet, with decisive effect, since we lost what turned out to be the decisive match for the title by two wins to one. Play continued 19...♘f4 20.♔h1 ♕d8 21.e5 c5?!. Black should have stayed passive, since after the next series of moves the position looks even more

dangerous than previously. But of course defending this position is not to everyone's taste, and certainly not to mine... 22.b3 cxd4 23.♕xd4 ♕g5 24.g3 ♘e6 25.♕f2 ♘b6 26.f4 ♕e7 27.f5 ♘g5 28.♕d4 ♖ac8 29.♘d3 ♖ed8 30.♘b5 ♘c4 31.♘f4 ♘a3 32.♘d6 ♘c2 33.♘xc8 ♕d7 34.♕d1 ♖xc8 35.♕xd5 ♕xf5 36.e6 fxe6 37.♖xe6 ♕xd5+ 38.♘xd5 ♔h7 39.♖e7 ♘d4 40.♖c7 ♖d8 41.♘f4 1-0; Giri-Fressinet, Montpellier 2015.

11...♘b6 12.f3 ♗d7 13.0-0 0-0

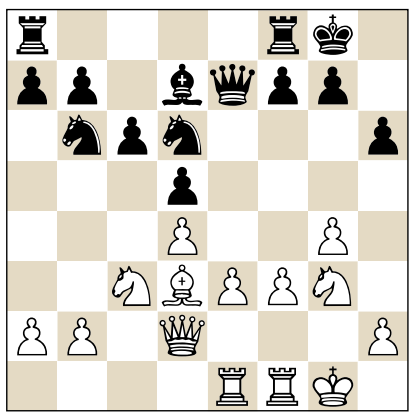


14.g4!? Instead of going for e4 at once, Shakh uncorks an interesting regrouping designed to make e4 even more powerful, although it will cost him his g4-pawn.

14...♘f6 15.♘g3 ♘e8

Redeploying the knight as a prophylaxis against a potential h4-g5 idea. After 15...♖fe8 16.♖ae1 c5 17.h4 the position of the knight on f6 could prove awkward after the inevitable g5, while ...c5 doesn't create much counterplay on the queenside.

16.♖ae1 ♘d6



17.e4! It's time for direct action before Black has time to regroup.

17...dxe4 18.fxe4 ♘dc4

MARIA EMELIANOVA

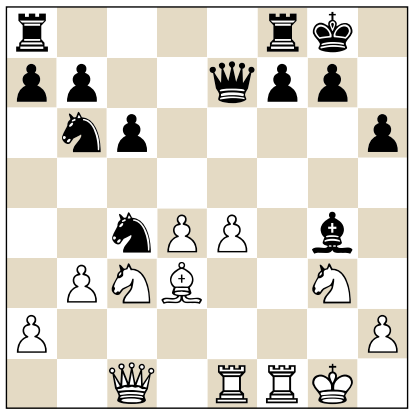
Michael Adams has often been successful with a solid pet line against the Queen's Gambit, but got into trouble against an inspired Shakhriyar Mamedyarov.

18...♗xg4 19.e5 ♘dc4 20.♕g2! would illustrate the vulnerability of Black's set-up. ♕e4 is a lethal threat and if 20...♗e6, 21.♖f6 would already decide the game in White's favour.

19.♕c1

19.♕g2? ♕b4 wouldn't work well for White in view of a potential ...♘xb2, which would also attack the bishop on d3.

19...♗xg4 20.b3



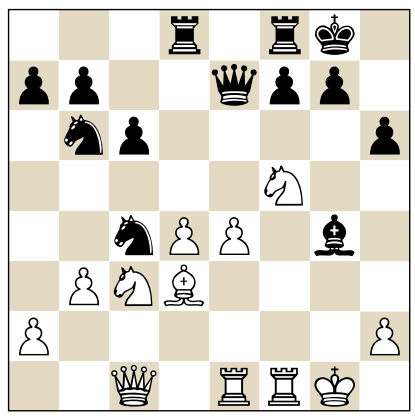
20...♖ad8!

A good practical decision. All other moves look terribly dangerous: 20...♘a5 21.e5! ♖ad8 22.♗f5! ♖xd4 23.♘ce4 would lead to a winning position for White after 23...♗xf5 24.♘xf5 ♕xe5 25.♘eg3, and Black loses a rook, since his queen has no suitable square.

20...♘a3 21.e5 ♘b5 22.♘xb5 cxb5 23.♗f5 ♕d8 24.♕f4 ♗xf5 25.♘xf5, and Black's king situation is not going to improve unless he exchanges queens, but after 25...♕g5+ 26.♕xg5 hxg5 27.♘e7+ ♔h7 28.d5 it's not the d-pawn that is likely to cause his downfall.

And finally 20...♘d6 21.e5 ♘e8 22.♗f5. Again this great resource offers White the opportunity to keep the attack going with tempo, while removing a potential defender of Black's king. 22...♗xf5 23.♘xf5 ♕g5+ 24.♕xg5 hxg5 25.♘e7+ ♔h7 26.♘e4, and the attack continues.

21.♘f5!



A good intermezzo. **21...♗xf5 22.exf5 ♕f6 23.♗xc4 ♘xc4 24.bxc4 ♕xd4+ 25.♔h1 ♖fe8**

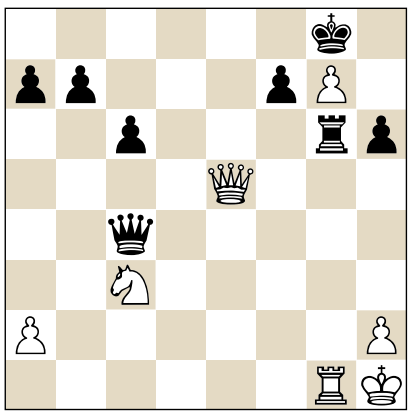
This is the position that both players had in mind. White has a clear advantage, but his attack falters because his pawns are weak and his king is not secure, meaning that the technical task of winning this position is extremely hard against accurate defending.

26.f6 ♖xe1 27.♕xe1 ♕xc4 28.fxg7 ♖d6!

This rook lift allows Black to defend the g-file via the 6th rank; a typical defensive manoeuvre.

29.♖g1 Instead, 29.♕e8+! ♔xg7 30.♕e5+ ♔g8 31.♖f3 ♖g6 32.♕b8+ ♔g7 33.♕xb7 doesn't look so powerful, but might have been the best way to proceed for White. Now it's Black's pawns that are weakened and the ♘c3 defends all essential squares against Black's queen.

29...♖g6 30.♕e5



30...♕e6?

Missing 30...♕d3!, which would have immediately granted Black the draw after 31.♖xg6 (or 31.♕e8+ ♔xg7 32.♖xg6+ ♔xg6) 31...♕f1+ 32.♖g1 ♕f3+ 33.♖g2 ♕f1+.

30...♖xg1+ 31.♔xg1 b5 was also better than the game.

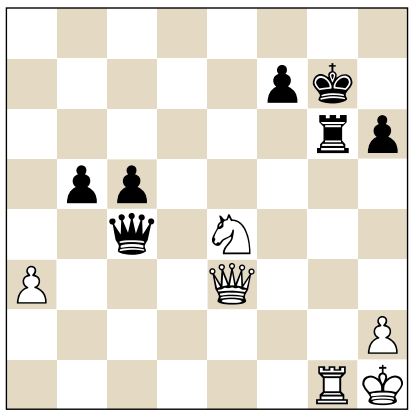
31.♕b8+ ♔xg7 32.♕xa7

Suddenly White is in control again.

32...♕c4

Instead, 32...♕e5, forcing the rook exchange, might have been a better choice, and after 33.♖xg6+ ♔xg6 34.♕g1+ ♔h7 35.♕b1+ ♔g7 36.♕d3 b5 Black keeps serious drawing chances due to the limited number of white pawns.

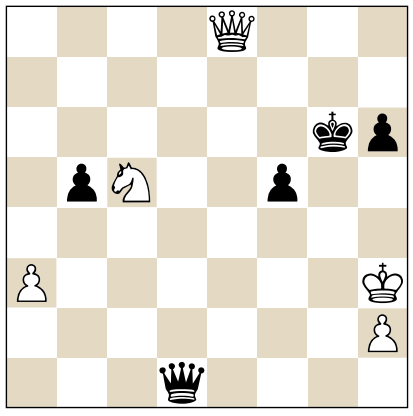
33.♕e3 b5 34.a3 c5 35.♘e4



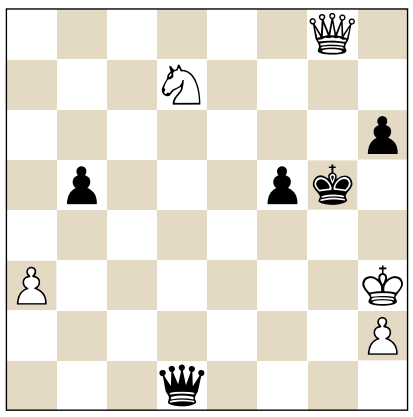
35...f5? 35...b4 was the only move, and only time-trouble can explain why Michael didn't go for it.

36.♖xg6+ ♔xg6 37.♘xc5 ♕d5+ 37...♕f1+ 38.♕g1+, check, may be what he had missed. **38.♔g1 ♕d1+ 39.♔g2 ♕d5+ 40.♔h3** Black has no defence now, and his next move hastens his demise even more.

40...♕d1 Trying to avoid queen swaps, but: **41.♕e8+**



41...♔f6 41...♔g5 42.♕d8+ ♕xd8 43.♘e6+ and wins. **42.♘d7+ ♔g5** Or 42...♔g7 43.♕f8+ ♔g6 44.♕g8+ ♔h5 45.♘f6, mate. **43.♕g8+**



Black resigned in view of 43...♔f4 44.♕g3+ ♔e4 45.♘f6+ ♔d4 46.♕d6+, and White wins the queen.

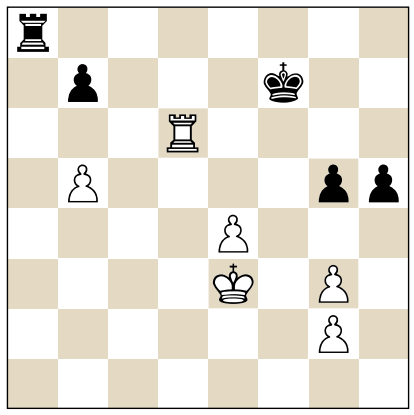
■ ■ ■

In my next game, I was paired against Levon Aronian, one of the favourites whom I haven't talked about so far, as he started with just draws. In this kind of event it is vital to create momentum at some point, but so far Levon hadn't managed to do this. In our game, I decided against another experiment in the Italian, since he is basically the worst player to pick for such experiments, and went for a very safe line in the Marshall that had already yielded me a couple of important wins. Levon was ready, though, and drew comfortably.

There were a few wins in this round, all of them crucial, since each win got the winner on +1 and therefore in the chasing pack right before the rest day. To begin with, Michael Adams bounced back with a beautiful technical effort against Jon Ludvig Hammer in the Italian, creating one weakness and then another with great manoeuvring play in his trademark style. And Sasha Grischuk managed to grind down Pavel Eljanov in the Ragozin.

NOTES BY
Alexander Grischuk

Alexander Grischuk
Pavel Eljanov
Sharjah 2017 (5)

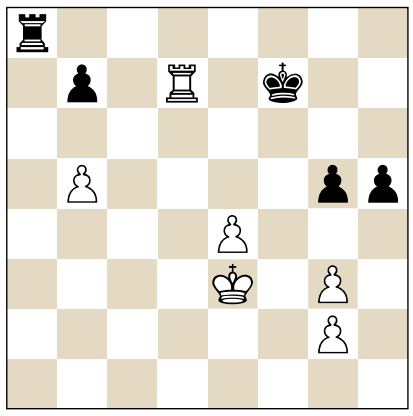


position after 41...♖a8

Before the time-control White was completely winning, but instead of a won knight ending I decided to go into a drawn rook ending. However, neither of us suspected this:

42.♖d7+

42.g4 was possibly more cunning, but after 42...hxg4 43.♔f2 ♖a3 44.♖b6 g3+ 45.♔e2 g4 46.♖xb7+ ♔e6 Black saves himself.



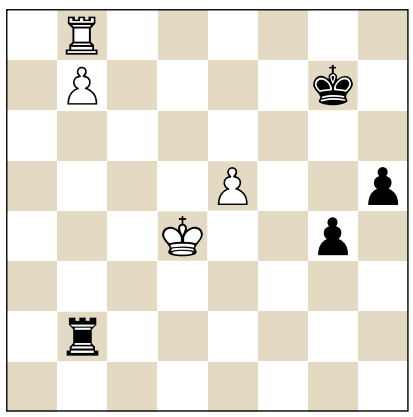
42...♔f6??

Apparently Pavel, like I, thought that he would also lose after 42...♔e6 43.♖xb7 ♖a3+ 44.♔f2 (with the king on e6, 44.♔d4 ♖xg3 is pointless) 44...♖a2+ 45.♔g1 ♖a1+ 46.♔h2 ♖e1 47.♖b8 – now in view of the position of the king on e6 Black cannot take the e4-pawn.

However, he could have saved the game with 42...♔e6 43.♖xb7 ♖a3+ 44.♔f2 ♖a2+ 45.♔g1 ♖a1+ 46.♔h2 g4! (but not 46...♖b1? 47.g4!). Without his king, White's pawns cannot promote, and the key variation 47.♖h7 (if 47.♖b8 ♖b1 48.b6 ♔d6) 47...♔e5 48.♖xh5+ ♔xe4 49.♖g5 ♖b1 50.♖xg4+ ♔f5 51.♖h4 ♖xb5 52.♖h5+ ♔g4 53.♖xb5 also leads to a draw.

43.♖xb7 ♖a3+ 44.♔d4 ♖xg3 45.b6 Here, with the king on f6, move by move White wins.

45...♖xg2 46.♖b8 ♖b2 47.b7 ♔g7 48.e5 g4



49.e6

MAX AVDEV

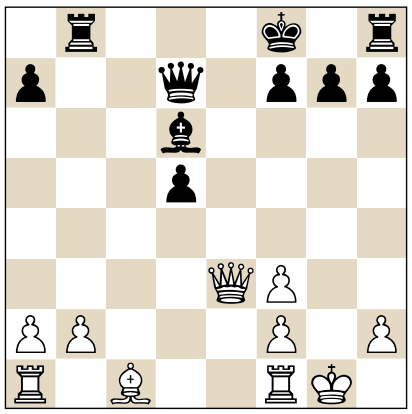
Alexander Riazantsev has already gotten up from his chair, and Dmitry Jakovenko reaches for his score-sheet as 'the blunder of the tournament' has put an abrupt end to their game.

More accurate was 49.♔c3!, as after the move played (49.e6), White cannot achieve anything more than the ending 'queen against rook' after 49...g3 50.e7 g2 51.♖g8+ ♔xg8 52.e8♕+ ♔g7. Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

Finally, Alexander Riazantsev, who had been playing consistent chess so far, produced the blunder of the tournament, from which Dmitry Jakovenko benefited.

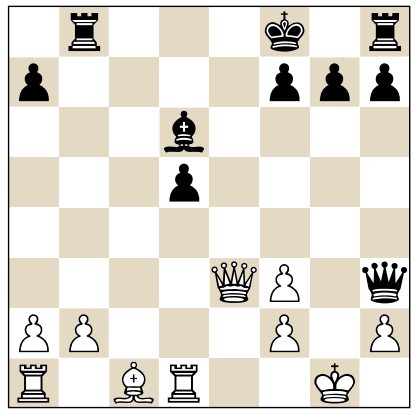
Alexander Riazantsev
Dmitry Jakovenko
Sharjah 2017 (5)



White is actually already at risk here, but with the following blooper Alexander started a very negative spiral in his tournament.

19.♖d1?? The right way to go was 19.♗d2!, giving up a pawn for active play: 19...♖xb2 20.♗c3 ♖c2 21.♖ac1 ♖xc1 22.♖xc1 f6 23.♕d2! ♕h3 24.♗b4 ♕xh2+ 25.♔f1 ♗xb4 26.♖c8+ ♔f7 27.♕xd5+ ♔g6 28.♖xh8 ♕h1+ 29.♔e2 ♕e1+ 30.♔d3, and this would have led to a draw, albeit not without a few accurate defensive moves from White.

19...♕h3



Black threatens not only to win the pawn on h2, but also White's queen, and the only defence 20.f4 ♕g4+ loses a rook. So White resigned.

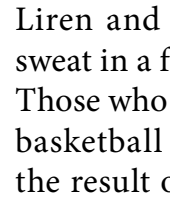
■ ■ ■

Before the rest day, some of the players, including a strong pack of Russians, Levon Aronian, Ding Liren and myself, went to break a sweat in a friendly basketball match. Those who have watched me playing basketball will have an idea about the result of this match, despite my teammate Sasha Grischuk getting all the rebounds he could. After that, it was time for a busy night with a Pro Chess League match online, while at the same time following the Champions' League matches.

The next day, playing Black against Michael Adams, I somehow got excited about my position, but then overlooked a crucial defensive opportunity for him.

Although I still kept an edge, I got frustrated about my miss and offered a draw prematurely. One of the crucial encounters was the draw between Nakamura and Grischuk. This time Hikaru returned to the Najdorf with a very forcing line which greatly taxed Sasha's memory.

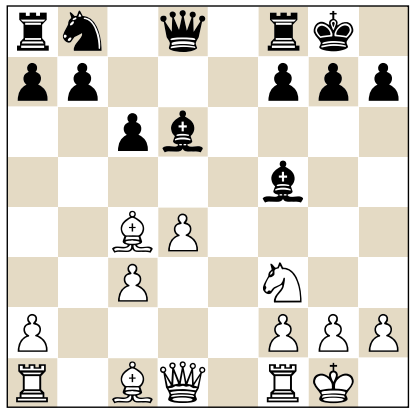
In one of the most attractive games of this Grand Prix, Ian Nepomniachtchi, who had had a solid run of draws so far, crushed Li Chao's Petroff in beautiful style.



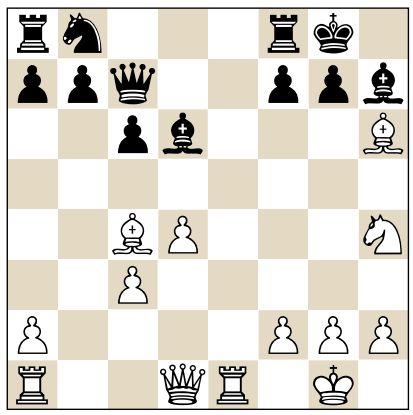
NOTES BY
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

Ian Nepomniachtchi
Li Chao
Sharjah 2017 (6)
Petroff, Marshall Variation

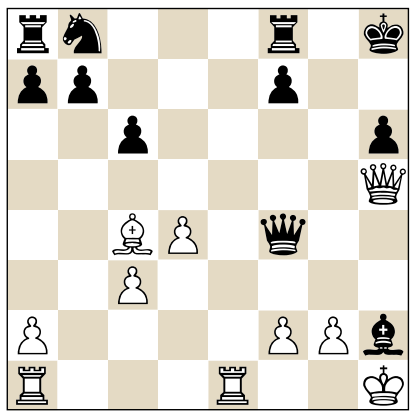
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.d4 d5 6.♗d3 ♗d6 7.0-0 0-0 8.c4 c6 9.♘c3 ♘xc3 10.bxc3 dxc4 11.♗xc4 ♗f5
Li Chao repeats his choice against me from the first round. Ian decides to deviate from my play (12.♘e5) and chooses the more common:



12.♗g5 ♕c7 13.♖e1 h6
But this reply is wrong, and Ian goes on to show why, undoubtedly with the help of thorough preparation.
14.♘h4! ♗h7 15.♗xh6!
White crashes through. It might not look decisive yet, but Black's pieces are too far from the action and will prove helpless in the next few moves.



15...♗xh2+ Taking the bishop is not very tempting: 15...gxh6 16.♕g4+ ♔h8 17.♘f5 ♗xh2+ (17...♖g8 hits on 18.♖e8! and 17...♗g6 18.♕h4! ♗xf5 19.♕f6+ ♔g8 20.♕xf5 ♗xh2+ 21.♔h1 ♕f4 would lead to the same line after 22.♕g6+ ♔h8 23.♕h5) 18.♔h1 ♗xf5 19.♕xf5 ♕f4 (a sad necessity, since White is threatening 20.♗d3) 20.♕h5

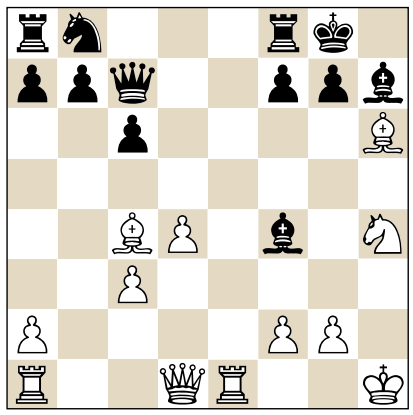


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

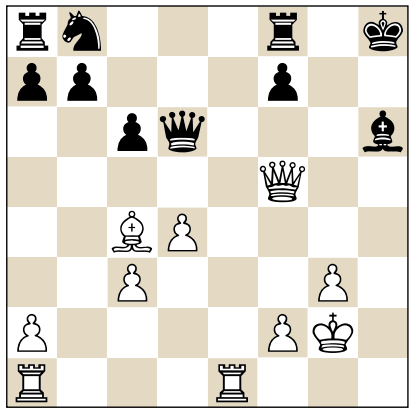
MAX AVDEV

In one of the most attractive games, Ian Nepomniachtchi crushed Li Chao's Petroff.

and White wins the piece back with a large positional advantage.
16.♔h1 ♗f4 Li Chao tries to find another defensive approach, but this makes matters even worse.



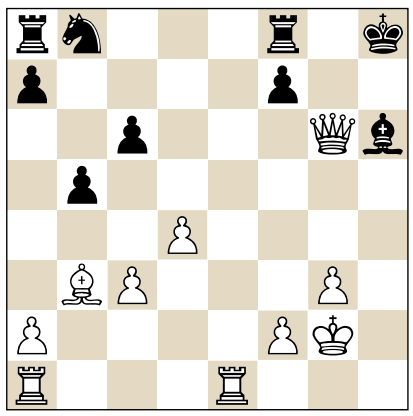
17.♗xg7! The logical follow-up. White proceeds in a fashion that has been seen before.
17...♔xg7 18.♕g4+ ♔h8
18...♗g6 19.♖e6 is one of White's numerous wins here.
19.♘f5! Again, this move eliminates the main defender of Black's king.
19...♗xf5 20.♕xf5 ♕d6
Li Chao had counted on this resource, but Black misses many pieces stuck on the queenside to defend his king.
21.g3 ♗h6 22.♔g2



Adding the rooks to the equation with decisive effect.

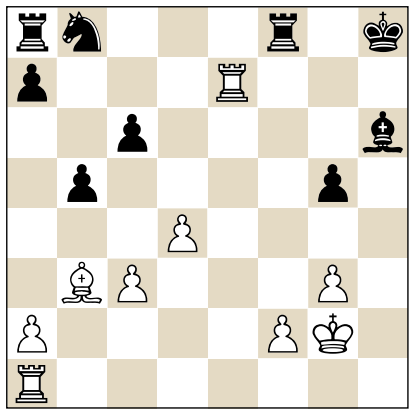
22...b5 22...♘d7 23.♖h1 ♔g7 24.♖h4 leaves Black defenceless, since both ♖g4+ and ♖ah1 are decisive threats: 24...♘f6 25.♖xh6! ♔xh6 26.♖h1+ ♔g7 27.♕g5 mate.

23.♗b3 ♕g6 24.♕xg6!



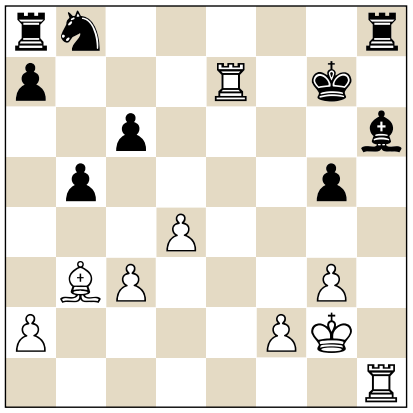
Exchanging queens simply to gain a vital tempo for the attack. Of course, Black's queenside not helping the defence is the decisive factor here.

24...fxg6 25.♖e7 g5



26.♖e6! 26.♖h1 ♖f6 27.f4 gxf4 28.g4 would also have worked perfectly well, as after 28...♘a6 29.g5 ♖g6 30.♔f3, followed by ♗c2, Black still has no defence.

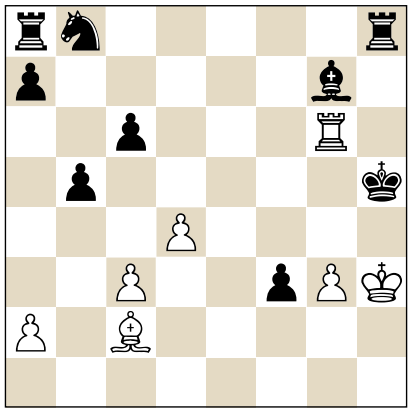
26...♔g7 27.♖h1 ♖h8 28.♖e7+



And now mate is forced after:

28...♔g6 29.♗c2+

Black resigned in view of 29...♔f6 30.♖he1 g4 31.♖1e6+ ♔g5, and here I cannot resist showing you the saddest part of Black's position: even a finger-fehler wouldn't save him, because after 32.♖g7+? (we would go 32.♖g6+, of course) 32...♗xg7 33.♖g6+ ♔h5 34.f3 gxf3+ 35.♔h3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

White still delivers mate!

■ ■ ■

The situation at the start of the last third of the tournament was very tight. Shakh Mamedyarov and I were in the lead with +2, but no fewer than five players were in the chasing pack with +1, meaning that each half point could prove crucial in the final standings. There was little change in the next round, with all players on 50+ per cent drawing their games. But the penultimate round the next day proved crucial for the standings, with one of the two wins being produced by a chaser against a leader! Sasha Grischuk takes us through his essential victory against Shakh Mamedyarov.

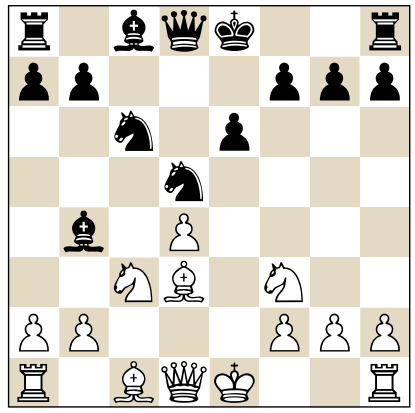
NOTES BY

Alexander Grischuk

Alexander Grischuk
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Sharjah 2017
Queen's Gambit Declined, Semi-Tarrasch

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3 c5 5.e3 ♘c6 6.cxd5 ♘xd5 7.♗d3 cxd4 8.exd4 ♗b4?!

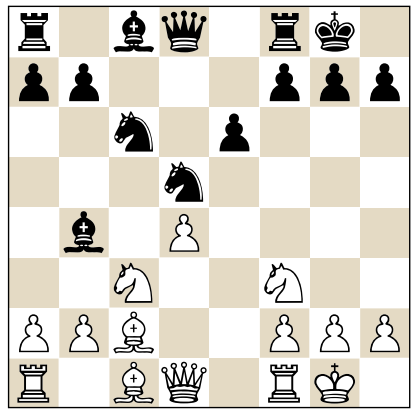
This is normally played without the inclusion of the moves ...♘c6 and ♗d3. In the given situation ...♗b4 is a serious inaccuracy.



9.0-0! 0-0?!

Black should probably have decided on 9...♗xc3 10.bxc3 ♘xc3, although here even 11.♕c2 ♘d5 12.♗xh7!? is interesting, when it is bad to play 12...g6? 13.♗xg6 fxg6 14.♕xg6+ ♔d7 15.♕g7+ ♘de7 16.d5 exd5 17.♘e5+ ♘xe5 18.♕xe5.

10.♗c2!



It is evident that the outcome of the opening is clearly advantageous to White. The bishop on b4 is obviously badly placed.

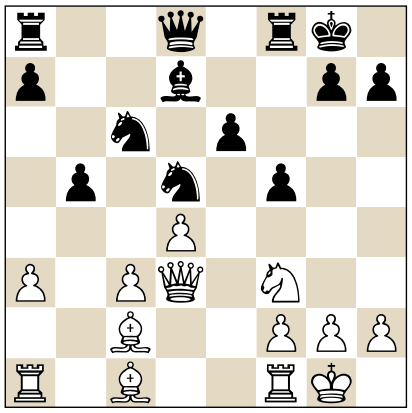
10...♗d7 11.a3 ♗xc3

11...♗e7 12.♕d3 g6 13.♗h6 ♖e8 14.♘e4 also holds little cheer.

12.♕d3

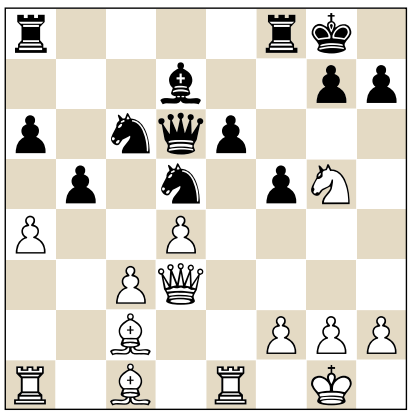
On 12.bxc3, Black continues 12...b5.

12...f5 13.bxc3 b5



Creating something like a defence, but now Black's position resembles a house of cards – blow on it, and it will collapse. However, I was unable to blow on it in the right way.

14.a4 a6 15.♖e1 ♕c7 16.♘g5 ♕d6



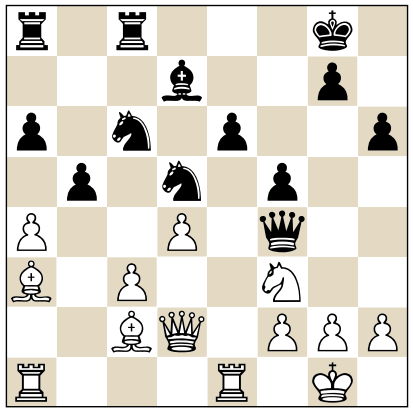
17.♕d2?

A move which is not so much bad, but idiotic. If 17.♗a3, I did not like 17...b4 18.cxb4 ♘f4 (18...♘cxb4 19.♕d2 a5 20.♗b3 h6 21.♘f3 ♖fc8 22.♘e5 ♔h7 is better, with an extremely unpleasant, but not hopeless position), but after 19.♕g3 ♘xd4 20.♗d1 Black can resign – he has no defence against 21.b5. But whereas this is at least understandable – in such a position one does not want to allow the opponent the possibility of playing his knight to f4 – how could I forget why in fact I had induced the queen to go to d6? This was quite inexplicable.

'How could I forget why in fact I had induced the queen to go to d6? This was quite inexplicable.'

Of course, I should have played 17.♗b3! h6 18.♘f3, and since 18...♘a5 19.♗a3 is not possible (it was for this that the queen was lured to d6; with the queen on c7 it was always possible to answer ♗b3 with ...♘a5), it is hard to offer Black any good advice.

17...h6 18.♘f3 ♖fc8! 19.♗a3 ♕f4!

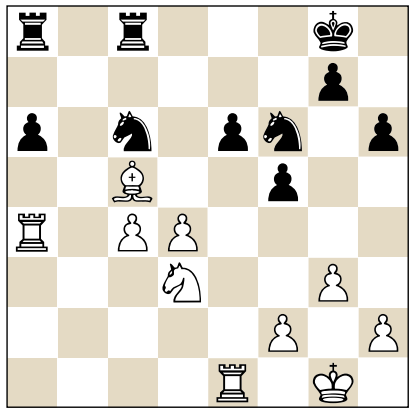


20.♕xf4?

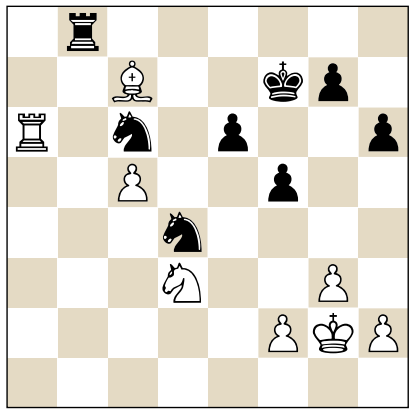
I avoided 20.♕d3 because of 20...♘xc3!? (otherwise things are altogether dismal for Black), and in the given instance it is indeed not immediately obvious that after 21.axb5! (21.♕xc3 b4 22.♗xb4 ♘xb4 23.♕xb4 ♖xc2 and Black is fine) 21...♘xb5 22.♗c5 for the pawn White has not merely 'more than sufficient', but simply overwhelming compensation.

20...♘xf4 21.♗c5 ♘a5 22.♘e5 ♗e8 23.g3 ♘d5 24.♖a3 bxa4! 25.c4 ♘f6 26.♗xa4 ♗xa4 27.♖xa4 ♘c6 28.♘d3

The preceding stage of the game (after the opening) was played excellently by Shakhriyar, but now he begins to go wrong. Any of the continuations indicated on this and the following moves would have led to a draw.



28...♘e4 28...♖d8!?. **29.♗b6 ♖cb8** 29...a5!. **30.c5 ♔f7?** 30...a5!. **31.♖ea1** Now Black again faces an unpleasant defence. **31...♘c3 32.♖xa6 ♖xa6 33.♖xa6 ♘e2+ 34.♔g2 ♘exd4 35.♗c7**

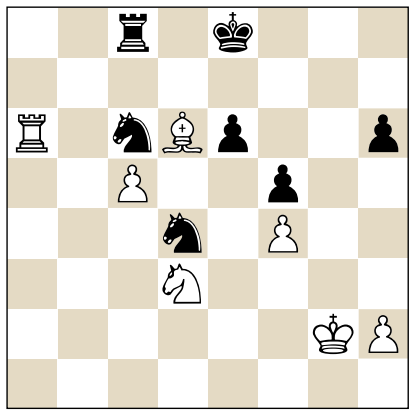


35...♖c8 Forced, in order after 36.♘e5 ♘xe5 37.♗xe5 to have 37...♘c6.

36.♗d6 g5! 37.f4 gxf4

Also in the event of 37...g4 38.♔f2 Black still has to suffer.

38.gxf4 ♔e8



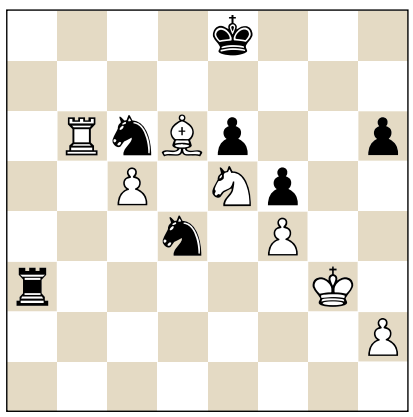
39.♖b6! 39.♔f2 ♔d7 40.♔e3 ♘c2+ 41.♔d2 ♘2d4 is fruitless, since the king cannot advance any further. But now 40.♖b7 is threatened.

39...♖a8!?

39...♘a5!! 40.♘e5 ♘dc6! is more accurate, but how realistic is it to find

this in time-trouble? Especially since after 41.♘xc6 ♖xc6 42.♖b4 ♔d7 43.♔g3 ♖c8 44.♔h4 Black still has to find a way to draw.

40.♘e5 ♖a2+ 41.♔g3 ♖a3+



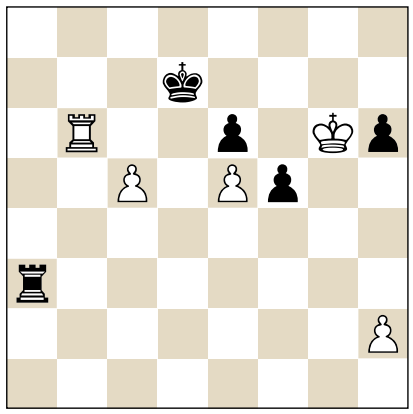
42.♔g2

Black's defence is based on several tactical nuances. The first: 42.♔f2 ♖a2+ 43.♔e3 (the second: 43.♔e1 ♘xe5 44.♗xe5 ♘f3+!) 43...♖a3+ 44.♔d2 ♘xe5 45.♗xe5 ♘b3+!.

42...♖a2+ 43.♔g3 ♖a3+ 44.♔h4 ♘xe5 45.♗xe5 ♘f3+ 46.♔h5 ♘xe5 47.fxe5 The third: 47.♖xe6+ ♔f7 48.♖xe5 ♖h3 mate!

47...♔d7 Black loses after 47...♖c3 48.♔g6 (but not 48.♖xe6+? ♔f7 49.♖f6+ ♔g7 50.c6?? ♖h3 mate).

48.♔g6 Clearly better than 48.♖d6+ ♔e7 49.c6 ♖e3 50.♖d7+ ♔e8.



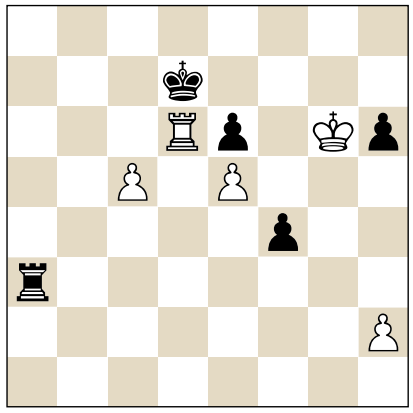
48...f4?!

During the game I did not see a win after 48...♖e3 49.♔f6 f4. The reason is rather banal – there isn't one! For example: 50.♖d6+ ♔c7 51.♔xe6 f3 52.♔d5 ♖d3+ 53.♔e4 f2 54.♖f6 ♖d2 55.♔e3 ♖d5. However, the move in the game also does not yet lose.

49.♖d6+

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Alexander Grischuk and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov both appeared in a good mood after the Russian had won their key encounter in the penultimate round.

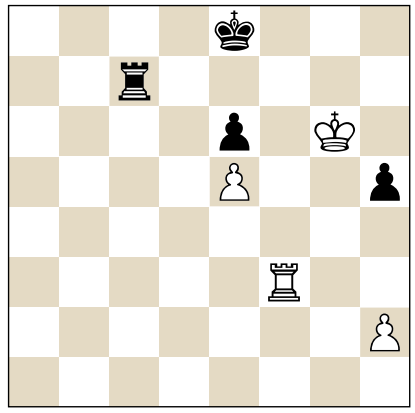


49...♔e7?

The only saving line was 49...♔c7! 50.♖xe6 ♖e3!!, when there is no win: 51.♔xh6 (51.♔f5 is met by 51...f3 52.♖f6 f2 53.♔e6 ♖e2) 51...♔d7 52.♖f6 ♖xe5 53.c6+ ♔e7 54.♖xf4 ♖c5. With the move played Black retains material equality, but loses the game.

50.c6 f3 50...♖c3 51.♖d7+ ♔e8 52.♖f7 ♖xc6 53.♖xf4 was also hopeless. Each side has only two pawns, but Black's pieces are so badly placed that he is lost.

51.♖d7+ ♔e8 52.♖f7 ♖c3 53.c7 h5 54.♖xf3 ♖xc7



55.♖h3! The last precise move.

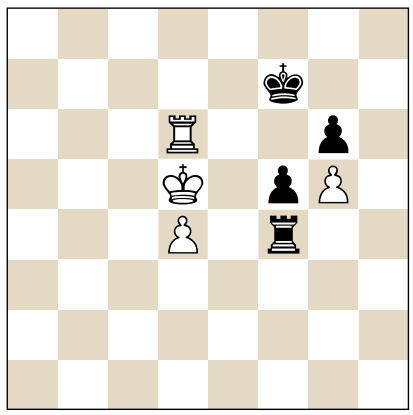
55...♔d7 56.♖xh5 ♖c4 57.♖h7+ ♔c6 58.♔f6 ♔d5 59.♖d7+ ♔e4 60.♖d1 Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

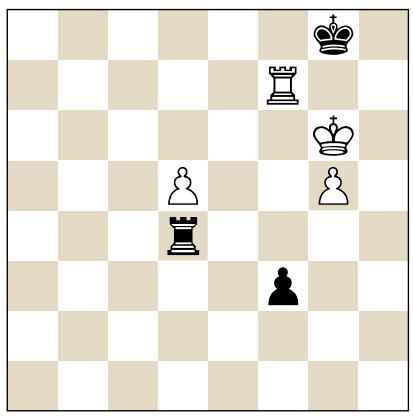
With Sasha Grischuk and me in the lead, the time had finally come for us to meet in the final round. I expected him to go for his usual Najdorf, but he surprised me with the Berlin, and I decided I was not fit enough to check what his idea in the endgame was going to be. Considering that a draw would guarantee me shared first place with Sasha, I went for the

safest line, although it still contained some venom if Black were to play carelessly. But this is not Sasha's style, and he managed to solve all problems very quickly. We had a relaxed chat afterwards, during which Sasha mentioned the following study-like endgame that could have happened earlier in the tournament between Li Chao and Hou Yifan. I can only encourage you to try to solve this position by yourself. Disclaimer, though: Li Chao didn't even come close to doing this in the game, and neither did I. Here it is, in Alexander Grischuk's words:

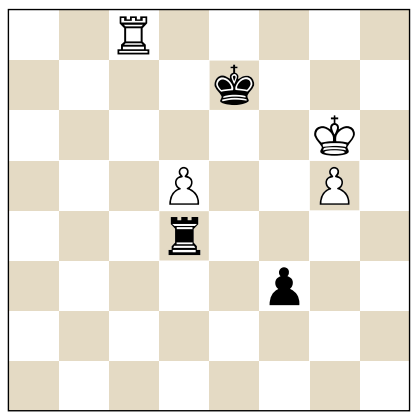
'I cannot avoid giving the study found by Alexander Khalifman, which could have arisen in the game Li Chao-Hou Yifan.



After the fairly obvious 76.♖d7+ (in the game 76.♔c6? ♖g4 was played, and the outcome was a draw) 76...♔f8 77.♔e6 (or 77.♔e5) 77...♖e4+ 78.♔f6 f4 79.d5 f3 80.♖f7+ ♔g8 81.♔xg6 ♖d4 it is now, strictly speaking, that the study arises.



82.♖c7!! Why to c7 in particular?
82...♔f8 82...♖f4 83.d6 f2 84.d7 ♖f8 85.♖c1 (mutual zugzwang!) 85...♖d8 86.♖c8!. This is why the rook can only go to c7! But what to do now?
83.♖c8+! ♔e7



84.♖c6!! ♖xd5 85.♖f6! White has lost several tempi, but he has cut off the opponent's king from the g-pawn.
86...♖d6 But if this? **86.♔g7!**
And after 86...♖xf6 87.gxf6+ ♔e6 88.f7 f2 89.f8♕ the white pawn promotes first. Astounding, in my opinion.'

■ ■ ■

Meanwhile, the fight went on between the players on +1. Considering the tournament situation and the consequences of sharing first place compared to a simple +1 result, it's surprising that Dmitry Jakovenko didn't try something more dangerous against Ian Nepomniachtchi. Hikaru Nakamura did try something to unbalance Michael Adams, but I don't think he ever got close, despite his determined efforts to break through Black's defences. Among the players on 50 per cent, Levon Aronian went for a bad opening choice against Ding Liren and after having been reduced to total passivity, he failed to put up much in the way of resistance while Ding Liren clinically finished the tournament on +1. To his own amusement, Paco Vallejo managed to make his ninth draw.

Finally, from the players on +1, Shakh Mamedyarov also had the chance to catch us. He had to beat Hou Yifan, who had had a very solid tournament with eight fighting draws, showing she definitely can hold her own against strong opposition. But that day, against a very motivated Shakh, she got outplayed tactically, as the winner explains.

MARIA EMELIANOVA

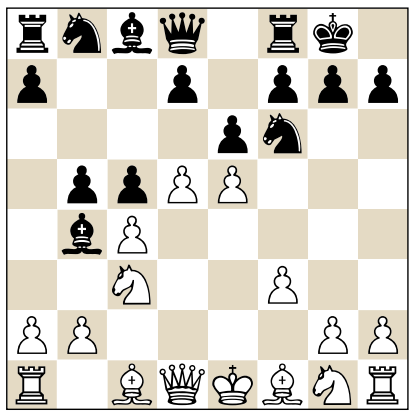
Hou Yifan was the only woman in the field, but when the Chinese star celebrated her 23rd birthday, there were plenty of other ladies to congratulate her.

NOTES BY
Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

Shakhriyar Mamedyarov
Hou Yifan
Sharjah 2017 (9)
Nimzo-Indian, Kmoch Variation

This was a crucial game for me, because I felt that if I won this game, I would share 1st place. Fortunately, the opening went very well for me and I got a clear initiative.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.f3 c5 5.d5 0-0 6.e4 b5 7.e5

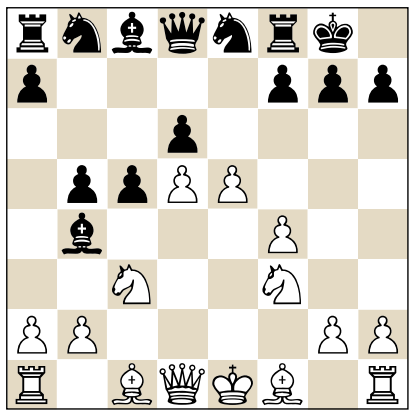


7...♘e8 Another theoretical position would arise after 7...exd5 8.exf6 d4 9.a3 ♗a5 10.b4 dxc3 11.bxa5, a line I analysed a lot with my team and prepared for the 2014 Candidates Tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk.

8.f4 d6

8...exd5 9.cxd5 d6 10.♘f3 transposes.

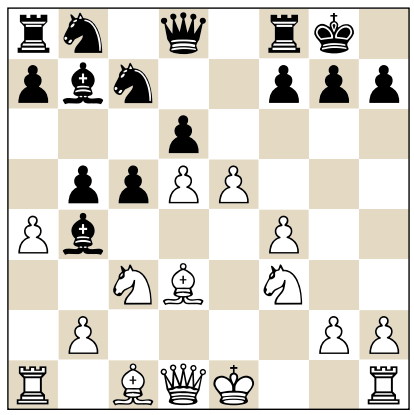
9.♘f3 exd5 10.cxd5



10...♘c7 In Khanty-Mansiysk, Karjakin chose 10...c4 against me. That game continued 11.a4 ♘d7 12.♗e2 ♕b6 13.axb5 ♘c7 14.♕d4 ♗b7 15.♗d2 ♗xc3 16.bxc3 dxe5 17.fxe5 ♗xd5 18.♗e3 ♕xb5 19.0-0 ♘e6 20.♕h4 and ended in a draw on move 60 after a lively fight.

11.a4 ♗b7 As 11...bxa4 12.♗d3! gives White a dangerous attack.

12.♗d3

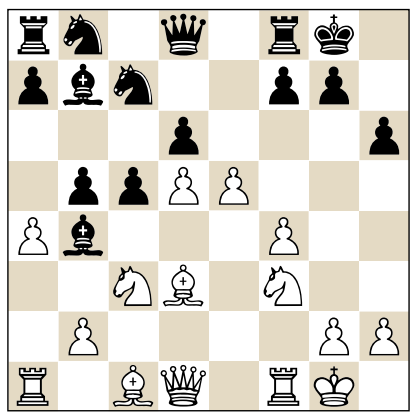


12...h6 After this new move I was out of book. Undoubtedly, Yifan is a very strong player, but I think she was not ready for this opening line, which is why Black ended up in a very unpleasant and difficult position right after the opening.

Black has to be careful. 12...♘xd5, for example, invites 13.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 14.♘g5+ ♔g8 (or 14...♕xg5 15.fxg5 ♘xc3 16.bxc3 ♗xc3+ 17.♗d2 ♗xa1 18.♕xa1, and White is winning) 15.♕h5 ♕xg5 16.fxg5 ♘xc3 17.0-0, with a clear advantage for White.

12...g6 was the best line in my notes. I had checked them before the game.

13.0-0



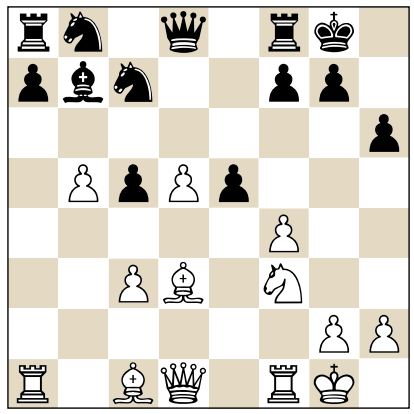
13...♗xc3

Again Black has to tread carefully. After 13...♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xd5 White goes 15.f5! dxe5 16.f6!! ♕xf6 17.♗h7+! ♔xh7 18.♘g5+ ♕xg5 19.♗xg5, and Black is lost.

14.bxc3 dxe5

14...♗xd5 is met by 15.♗b1! dxe5 16.fxe5 ♘d7 17.♗xh6! (17...gxh6 18.♕d3).

15.axb5



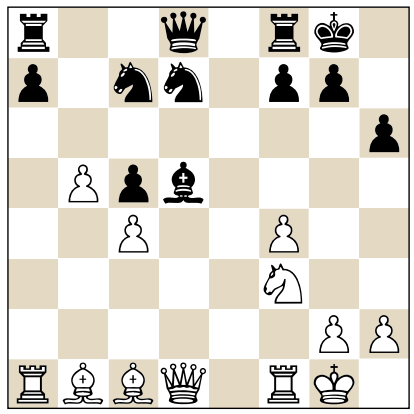
15...e4 Taking the pawn on d5 is not really an option.

White is much better after 15...♕xd5 16.c4 ♕d8 17.fxe5 a6 18.♗e3 ♘e6 19.♗b1!.

And after 15...♗xd5 16.♘xe5 ♘d7 17.♘xd7 ♕xd7 18.c4 ♗e6 19.♗e2!, White is not even a pawn up, but Black's position is just about to collapse. Soon she will lose all pawns on the queenside. White is completely winning.

Also sad is 15...♘xd5 16.fxe5 ♘xc3 17.♕d2 ♘d5 18.♗e4, and White wins.

16.♗xe4 ♗xd5 17.♗b1! ♘d7 18.c4!



18...♗b7 Pretty hopeless is 18...♗xf3 19.♕xf3 ♘e6 20.♗e4 ♘d4 21.♕d3 ♖c8 22.♖xa7, and Black is lost.

And 18...♗xc4?? of course fails to 19.♕c2.

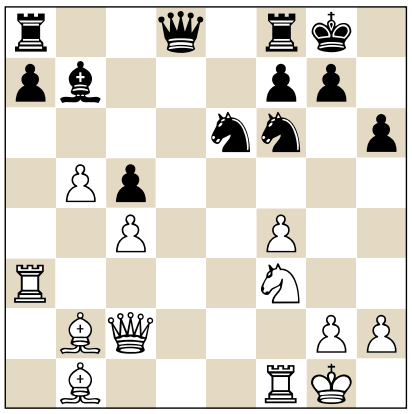
19.♖a3!? After this move White has a fantastic grip on the black position.

19...♘e6 20.♕c2 ♘f6

During the game I thought 20...f5 was the only option, although Black has many weaknesses and, with precise play by White, will be unable to hold the

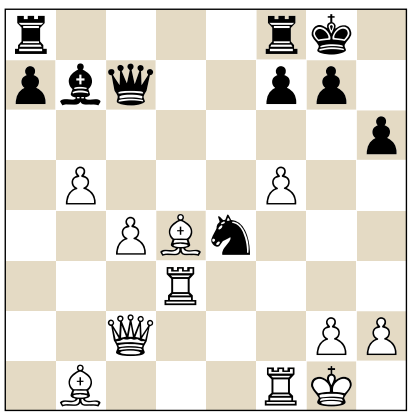
position after, for instance, 21.♗b2 ♗e4 22.♕f2.

21.♗b2



21...♘e4? A final mistake. But anyway Black's position was hopeless, e.g. 21...♗e4 22.♗xf6 ♗xc2 23.♗xd8 ♗xb1 24.♖xb1 ♖fxd8 25.g3 and after ♖ba1 and the manoeuvre ♘e5-c6, the a7-pawn will be lost.

22.♖d3 ♕c7 23.f5 ♘d4 24.♘xd4 cxd4 25.♗xd4



Game over. **25...a6 26.b6 ♕c6 27.f6 ♖fd8 28.fxg7 ♖d6 29.c5 ♖g6 30.♗a2 ♘g5 31.♖g3 ♘h3+ 32.♔h1** Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

In the end, it meant that in terms of Grand Prix points, Grischuk, Mamedyarov and I collected an enviable 140 points each (the average of the number of points to be earned by the top three finishers: 170-140-110), while the five players finishing on +1, including Nakamura, only collected 70 points.

This huge difference is an important element in the debate about the tournament being boring. It undoubtedly was, and as I already stated, I for one was not happy with my cautious approach after my initial two wins, followed by my scare against Shakh. But it is clear that with two Candidates spots at stake, and one bad tournament likely to be a big handicap in this race, players were generally less inclined to take risks, especially once they were getting close to the leader.

It is possible to imagine different scenarios, which would have led to a completely different approach by the players, and my prediction is that we will see this in the next event in Moscow, with the players on +1 or less forced to take risks if they want to have a realistic shot at one of the two tickets.

For the first time in years, there were no restrictions on draw offers, which was very obvious in the few games that ended prematurely, but even though I'm one of the perpetrators, I think it would have been preferable to introduce at least a 40-move limit, which, after all, is one of the standard procedures nowadays. ■

Sharjah 2017

			PTS	TPR	GP-PTS
1	Alexander Grischuk	2742	5½	2828	140
2	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	2796	5½	2824	140
3	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	2766	5½	2814	140
4	Ding Liren	2760	5	2751	70
5	Michael Adams	2751	5	2779	70
6	Dmitry Jakovenko	2709	5	2784	70
7	Hikaru Nakamura	2785	5	2780	70
8	Ian Nepomniachtchi	2749	5	2768	70
9	Richard Rapport	2692	4½	2726	25
10	Pavel Eljanov	2759	4½	2693	25
11	Li Chao	2720	4½	2722	25
12	Francisco Pons	2709	4½	2714	25
13	Levon Aronian	2785	4	2692	7
14	Hou Yifan	2651	4	2681	7
15	Salem Saleh	2656	3½	2624	3
16	Jon Ludvig Hammer	2628	3½	2647	3
17	Evgeny Tomashevsky	2711	3½	2630	3
18	Alexander Riazantsev	2671	3	2587	1

International Correspondence Chess Federation
Official Website | www.iccf.com

Play with the world's best correspondence chess players on one of the most advanced chess servers in the world.

Register at: **www.iccf-webchess.com**

Join a team of thousands playing great chess at ICCF.

ICCF also offers World Championships, Olympiads, and many other Team and Individual Tournaments where you can participate from any place around the globe.

View live games of the world's best players – also free games downloads.

Contact us at: **www.iccf.com**

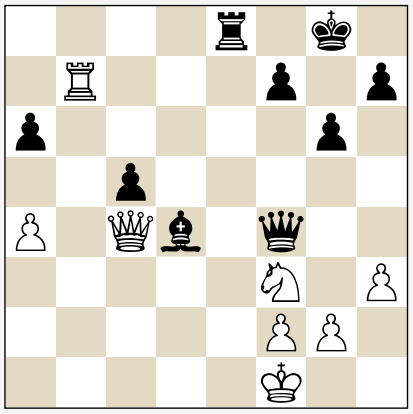
MAXIMize your Tactics

with Maxim Notkin

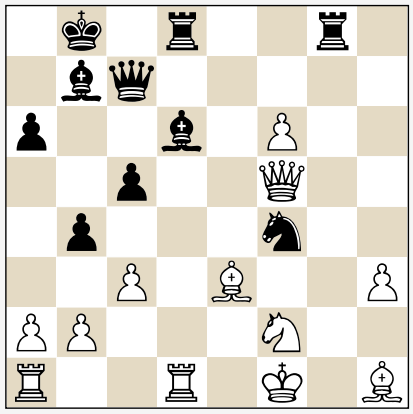
NEW IN CHESS * TRAINING *

Find the best move in the positions below

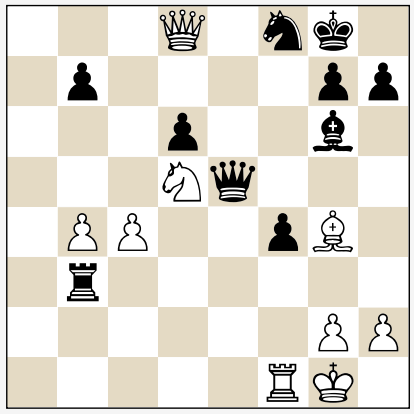
Solutions on page 87



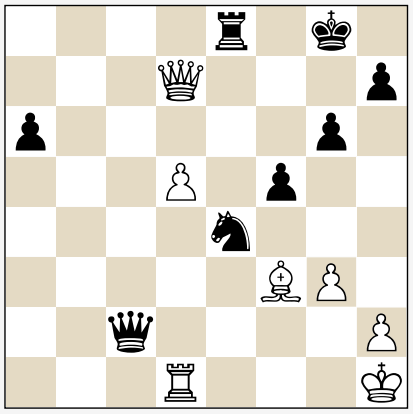
1. Black to play



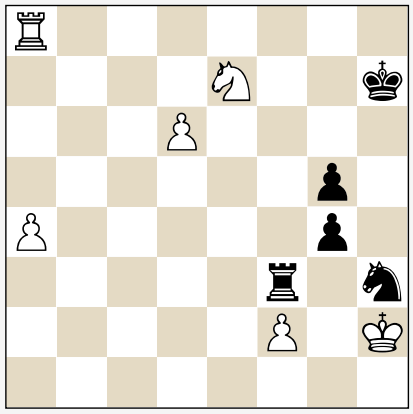
2. Black to play



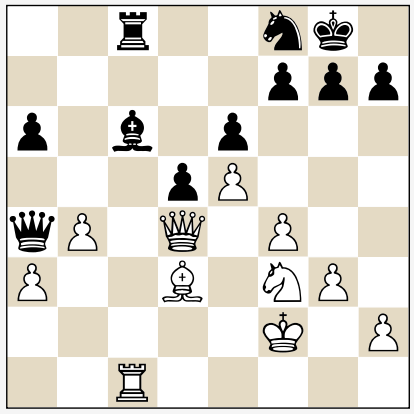
3. White to play



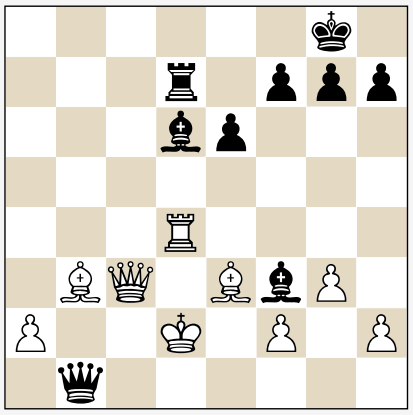
4. Black to play



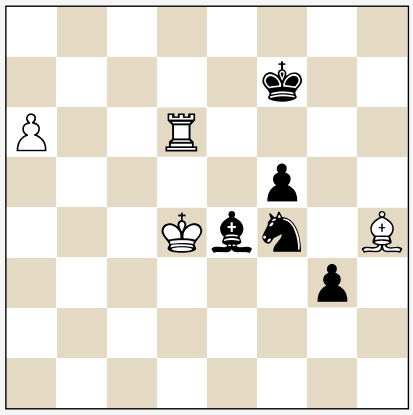
5. Black to play



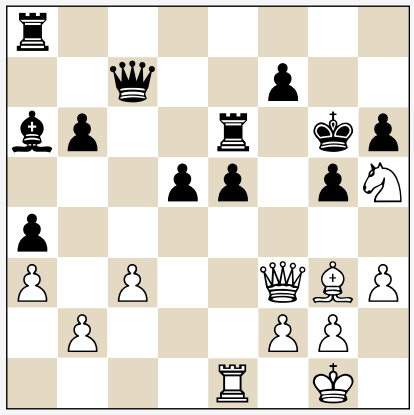
6. White to play



7. Black to play



8. White to play



9. White to play

An Aleatory Career

It may be psychologically comforting to imagine that we are fully in control of our own destinies, but the reality of life is somewhat different: many things are determined by sheer chance. There was nothing remotely preordained about your scribe becoming a professional chess player. With hindsight, it is evident that had it not been for a dramatic Cold War clash on a lava-strewn, mid-Atlantic island, in 1972, it is highly unlikely I would have followed this particular path. Of course, millions of other fans also experienced the Fischer-Spassky match vicariously, on television and in print. Naturally, even among those who were inspired to take up the game competitively, as I was, not all of them persevered.

I was fortunate, however, to have been born at a propitious time, being just seven years old when this epic, stirring spectacle played out on our screens. A child's mind is exceedingly supple and can absorb new concepts, information and indeed languages with extraordinary rapidity. Had I been five years older, my prospects of reaching the elite would have receded sharply – ten years and they would have vanished altogether. The enormous potential impact of the accident of birth has been examined, in another field, by Malcolm Gladwell, in his bestseller *Outliers*. There he explains how even the month of delivery (and hence physical size at school) greatly skews the development of young Canadian ice-hockey players.

Another serendipitous occurrence was that my family lived in an area – the Northwest – with a relatively thriving chess community. The Victorian titans Amos Burn and Joseph Blackburne also emerged from this industrial region. Perhaps London would have offered more opportunities, but in Lancashire there were respectable opponents aplenty. This afforded a benign, eclectic education. In Bolton, by observing Martyn Corden – nowadays a forgotten player, but who once defeated Vassily Smyslov at Hastings – I acquired the quirky Barendregt Variation (2.♘e2) of the Caro-Kann. As a surprise weapon, it still brings the occasional victory. From the scourge of the local weekend-circuit, Jeff Horner, I gained an appreciation of the Worrall Attack, which, in 1992, would be used to devastating effect against Anatoly Karpov. Of course, I learned a lot more than mere openings in this environment. Such nurseries are vital for the dissemination of ideas. India might have been a mediocre chess nation during the 1970s, but fate decreed that Vishy Anand was born in its leading centre – Madras – where the influence of Manuel Aaron, the country's first IM, was profoundly felt. Had Vishy instead hailed from some sleepy, provincial town, it is possible we might never have become aware of his brilliance. By extraordinary coincidence, Anand was living in the Philippines, where his father was working on assignment, at the time of the Karpov-Kortchnoi match in Baguio. In his own words, he 'got caught up in the... chess fever'. At home in the subcontinent, it did not hurt that Vishy also came from a relatively wealthy Brahmin background. Indeed, it was probably essential. Thanks to his groundbreaking international triumphs, nowadays dozens of Indian players benefit from sinecures at state companies, but it was a different landscape back then.

Given that certain fortuitous circumstances appear to have an enormous impact on the prospects of success, what then is one to make of Laszlo Polgar's bold claim that genius is made and not born? The famous father and evangelical pedagogue is not completely wrong. With his own remarkable family experiment, he demonstrated not only the vital role of parental support but just how much could be achieved with concerted effort. Three daughters were liberated from the irksome burden of attending school and immersed in an intensive chess programme, with trainers and no want of literature, over many years. One could quibble that, given the exorbitant privileges they enjoyed, the fact that Sofia only became an IM is, in the higher sense, a didactic failure. That is unless, of course, you believe that women play worse than men, on average – in which case you would judge by different, lower, standards. Be that as it may, the same certainly cannot be said of Sofia's younger sibling, Judit – ranked in the top 10, by right, and unquestionably the greatest female practitioner in history. And even Susan, with all the insincerity, boastfulness, and deceitful trumpery that has sullied her reputation, once had a distinguished playing career.

Laszlo Polgar, more or less then, proved a point with his own offspring. It is an exceptionally rare case, of course, because most people simply do not have the option to keep their kids at home. What he conspicuously did not do, however, was to show that the same could be achieved with any child. It is one thing when the pupils share the same genes as their university-educated teachers, it is another thing altogether when they

do not. Given the immense complexity of chess and the multifarious skills (memory, calculation, planning etc.) required to master it, it is almost inconceivable that a child of merely average intelligence, or less, could eventually rise to the summit, however intensively trained. From a purely scientific perspective, it is regrettable that Klara Polgar vetoed the best, or perhaps only, way to properly test the hypothesis. The late billionaire sponsor Joop van Oosterom apparently once proposed to financially support the celebrated educators in adopting three boys from a third-world country. The idea was to inflict the same tuition upon the hapless youths and compare results. One can only pity the poor woman who inevitably would have had to bear the brunt of the work.

Professor David Robertson, from Liverpool, once expressed bewilderment that someone from such modest, unacademic, plebeian stock, as myself, could have attained so much in the game. He didn't quite say 'How could such a dolt become the greatest British player of the 20th century?' but there was at least a hint of that in his interrogatory pondering. I discovered – only a few weeks ago, in fact – that my mother accomplished the top marks in her school and that my older brother Martin had the highest IQ in his year in our area. Perhaps my pedigree was less inauspicious than my learned friend supposed. I would not be so conceited as to argue that atypical intelligence is a prerequisite for chess success, but I do claim you have to be reasonably smart.

An addictive personality is a boon. Nowadays it is popularly assumed that 10,000 hours are necessary to master any difficult subject. People evidently learn at very

'It is pure nonsense to suppose that every child could become a grandmaster. Wayne Rooney? Give us a break.'

different speeds, so it is implausible to assume that the same conveniently rounded figure applies to everyone. If industry alone determined success, Portisch and Polugaevsky would have been World Champions. Nevertheless, a lot of work is indubitably required and so it helps if you thoroughly enjoy what you are doing. Some years ago I offended a number of Dutch chess fans by saying in an interview that I could easily imagine Jeroen Piket working in an office. The remark wasn't intended to be rude, it was just an observation. Sure enough, a short while later, he quit chess to work in an office. Jeroen liked his chess but, ultimately, he was insufficiently hooked. It sometimes helps to be a junkie.

Other character traits play their role: confidence is an asset, timidity is not. We all know players for whom, barring immediate mate, the offer of a draw provokes an instantaneous Pavlovian extension of the right arm. In team competitions, cowardice can even become selfishness, if it involves abandoning colleagues to their fate. Such craven poltroons never make it to the top. A fear of a different kind afflicts a few: I know a handful of quite decent players who don't like to travel. Missed opportunities therefore become inescapable. With the aid of a psychologist, inherent tendencies can be ameliorated, but never completely eliminated.

'I would not be so conceited as to argue that atypical intelligence is a prerequisite for chess success, but I do claim you have to be reasonably smart.'

It is hardly surprising that a man like Laszlo Polgar, who foisted the useless, utopian argot of Esperanto upon his brood, should possess messianic zeal. But despite my distaste of social engineering, I believe he has performed a real service to humanity by opening the eyes of many to the huge potential of education. One thing that has been abundantly clear in my travels around the globe is that raw chess talent abounds everywhere. Given favourable circumstances, it would thrive. Where I disagree sharply is to the extent of Laszlo's claims. By analogy, my fastest recorded time for the 100 metres at school was a pitiful 17.4 seconds. No doubt that could have been substantially improved with hard training. But given such shoddy biomechanical material, literally nothing could ever make me into an Olympic athlete. Ditto it is pure nonsense to suppose that every child could become a grandmaster. Wayne Rooney? Give us a break.

All this is in the realms of theory. In practice, opportunities will always be haphazardly distributed. If we have the gift, we might just seize them. But in essence chess remains an aleatory career. ■

Time-trouble

Some love it, many fear it. **PARIMARJAN NEGI** tells you when time-trouble is your enemy. Or your friend.

Everyone struggles with time-trouble at some point. One of the simplest advices I have been hearing forever has been: make sure you don't get into time-trouble. But this is of no practical use, of course. Maybe it is useful for players who run low on time in every game. This article is not meant for those players. Indeed, they usually deal quite well with time-trouble, just by sheer practice. Most players do not plan to get low on time. And telling them to 'avoid' time-trouble can only be counter-productive. I have seen numerous players getting tensed up about getting into time-trouble while still having plenty of time left. This inevitably leads to more mistakes.

The main difficulty is that it is hard to find anything good about time-trouble. Everything else being equal, isn't it always better to have more time than less? In an absolute sense, that sounds reasonable enough, but it fails to take psychological effects into account. Time-trouble affects everything – from your concentration to your opponent's decisions. Being low on time may even have benefits. As I will show you later, the game becomes very different when you are low on time – for you as well as for your opponent. More importantly, it requires you to use different strategies than in the rest of the game. And you need to adapt.

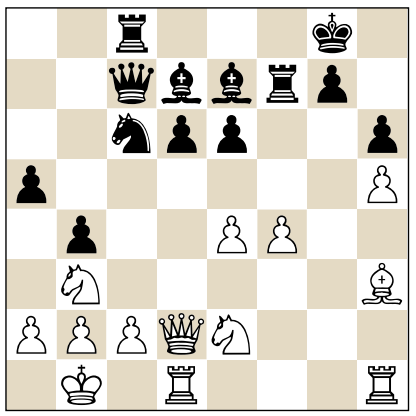
This leads to my first rule: **Rule 1: Do not be afraid of time-trouble**. If you are afraid, you can forget about adapting to new situations. Now, this sounds trivial – but it is very hard to internalize. The fear is well-founded. We have all seen time-trouble disasters – including some by very famous players. It is common to think that blundering in time-trouble is par for the course, because so many strong players seem to do it. And as if having little time wasn't bad enough already, you start imagining you will lose because you will run out of time. You don't have to be an expert in psychology to realize that such fears only interfere with your performance – less focus, less calculation and more desperation. There are countless examples of just this psychological fear being enough to lose a game. I am sure you know a bunch of them from your own experience.

But how does one just stop fearing time-trouble? First, it is crucial to realize why blunders happen. The biggest reason, of course, is the panic and desperation mentioned above. But that's not the only reason. Which leads me to **Rule 2: Do not try to calculate lines**. True, you need to watch out for basic tactics, but typically you just need to watch out for one- or two-move tactics. This is just about being tactically aware, not trying to churn out complicated calculations quickly. Blunders don't just spring out of nowhere. Most of the time, they are the result of you creating action on the board. If nothing forced is happening on the board, tactical oversights are far less likely.

The ideas of dealing with time-trouble are common to many different time-controls. A very common one is that with 30-second increments per move. So let's imagine you have 30 seconds or one minute per move. What can you do in that much time? You certainly can't be sure that your calculations will stand up, especially in even slightly complicated positions.

People still insist on calculating constantly during time-trouble. They will calculate when it is their opponent's move, and they will calculate frantically in their own time. There are many reasons for this. I think one of them is that calculating lines gives you the idea that you are doing something. But people are also often in a hyper-active, adrenaline-induced state in a time-scramble, which makes calculating feel more natural. But it is the opposite of what you should be doing. It takes a toll on your mind, on your focus. Here is an example from one of my own games – with comments from a wiser me about what else I could have been thinking about.

Sergey Fedorchuk
Parimarjan Negi
Paris 2009

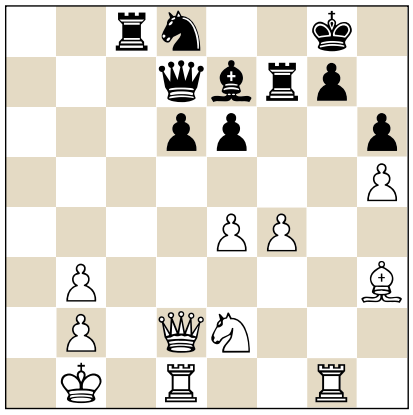


position after 23.♕d2

I don't remember precisely how much time I had here, but it wasn't much. I was also trying to calculate many variations – but I did not stop and try to look at the bigger picture. I was worried that he would get play on the

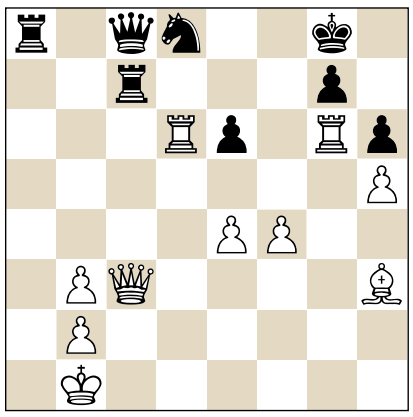
kingside (with ♖hg1, etc.) or pressure against the e6-pawn, so I really wanted to do things on the queenside quickly. This led to my decision to sacrifice the pawn with ...a4 and ...b3. But if I had just thought about the situation, I would have realized that there was no reason to rush. Instead, I could have dealt with his ♘c5/♘bd4 ideas in many non-committal ways. The simplest would just be 23...♘d8 or 23...♕b6, or 23...♗f8. These aren't necessarily the best moves in the position, but they would have solved a concrete problem, avoided any immediate tactics, and kept me fighting. Instead, my pawn sacrifice just opened up the game to a lot of tactics, and it goes without saying that I hadn't calculated any of it properly.

23...a4? 24.♘c5 b3 25.cxb3 axb3 26.axb3 ♘d8 27.♘xd7 ♕xd7 28.♖hg1?!



Now 28...♖a8 or 28...♕a7 would probably have been stronger. But these lines are far too concrete to play with little time, and I duly drowned in the sea of variations:

28...♕b7 29.♕e3 ♖a8 30.♖g6! ♕c8 31.♘c3 ♗f6 32.♖xd6 ♗xc3 33.♕xc3 ♖c7



'The game becomes very different when you are low on time – both for you, and your opponent.'

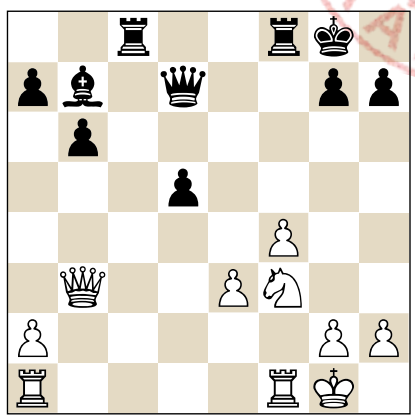
34.♖c6!

A nice touch, and White won easily (1-0, 43). Clearly, I could have done better if I had not insisted on going for such forcing variations.

It is especially bad to calculate while your opponent is thinking. Actually, one of the most crucial skills of playing with little time is what you do while your opponent is thinking. As the player low on time you should just focus on the big questions: Are there obvious tactical threats? Is there a piece I can improve? Another nice thing to do in your opponent's time is to think about candidate 'safe' moves, which don't really hurt your position and might improve it a bit.

This gets me to my next rule. **Rule 3: steer clear of forced lines, and go for safe moves**. Remember: Do not hurt your position – especially with forcing sequences.

Darwin Laylo
Parimarjan Negi
Cebu 2007

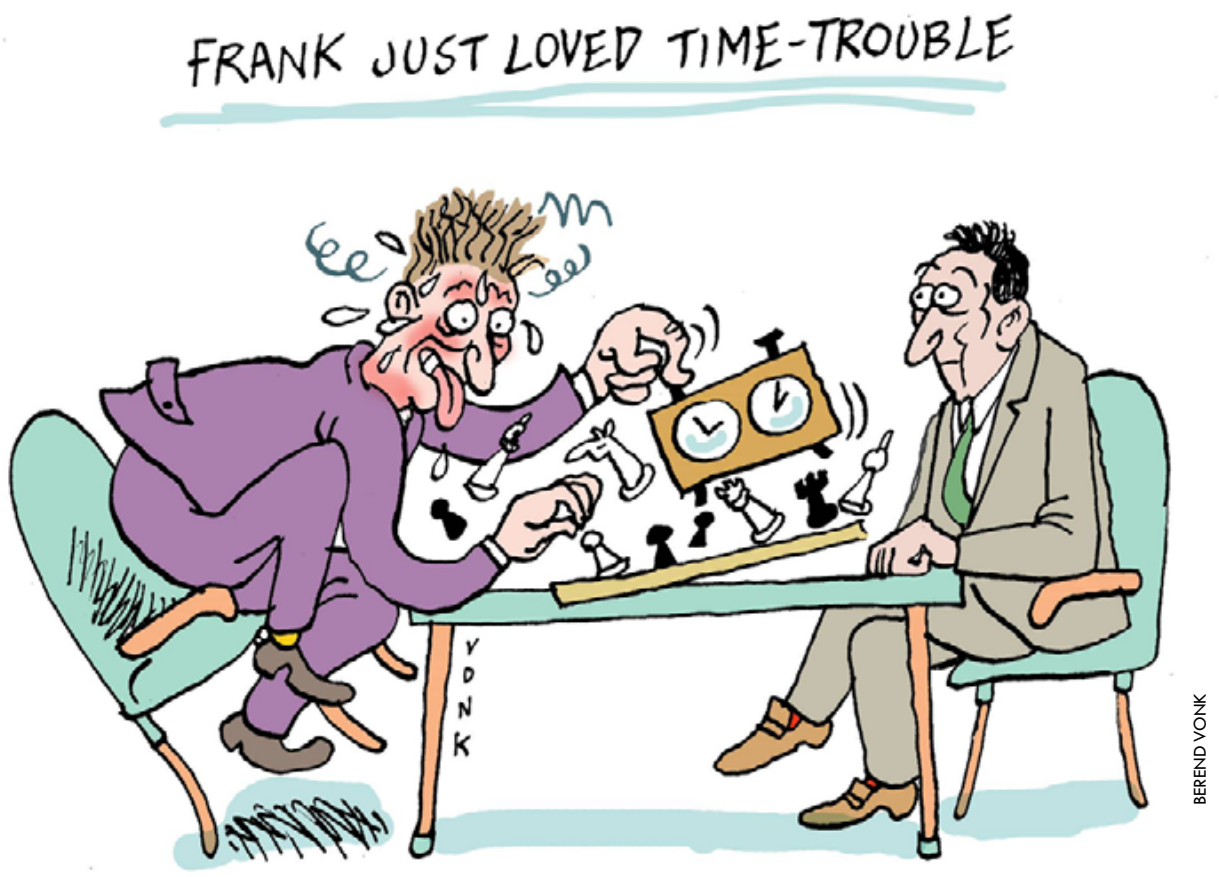


position after 20.♕b3

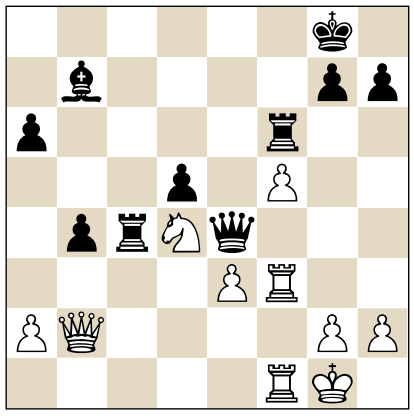
20...♕f5!? 21.♕a3 a6 Defending a pawn is always a quick and easy decision. **22.♘d4 ♕e4 23.♖f3 ♖c4** The rook looks nicely placed here, and I had no idea what else to do, so I thought I might as well.

24.♕b2 b5 Again, defending pawns is easy. **25.♖af1 ♖f6** My idea was to keep the advance f5 and f6 in check. Again, I still thought my position sucked, but I just wanted to survive a bit longer and keep his threats under control.

26.f5 b4! I wasn't sure what to do, so I started pushing pawns on the queenside. At least they didn't seem to harm

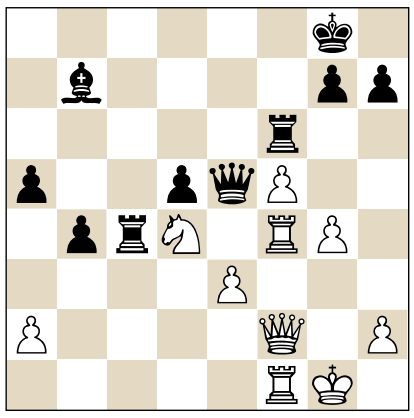


the position. Also, I had hopes of activating my b7-bishop at some point. Note how none of my ideas really deal with the concrete situation, but are much more general. It is far easier to follow such long-term ideas when you are low on time than concrete plans.



27.♕f2 a5 28.♖f4 ♕e5 29.g4

The light-squared bishop had been making me suffer a lot. I had been thinking of ways to improve it, and my last few moves were possibly based on this. Now I got the perfect chance:

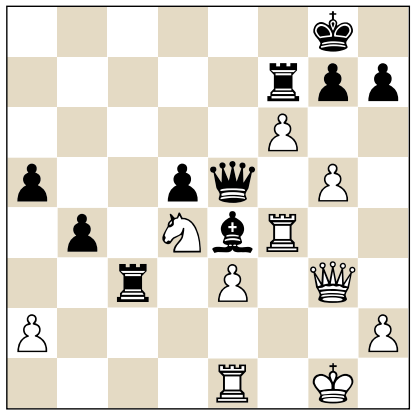


29...♖c3 30.♖e1 ♗a6!

The bishop is already much better on this diagonal, but more importantly, it can come to e4.

31.g5 ♖f7 32.♕g3 ♗d3! 33.f6 ♗e4

I didn't really calculate anything, but in the last 10 moves or so I turned a position I wasn't happy with at all into a really pleasant one – all with hardly any time left on my clock! I think the fact that I had little time also benefited me here: it made White very ambitious, while I just did not worry about concrete details on the kingside. If I had had more time, I would probably have been a lot more scared of the kingside pawns. Now he just collapsed:

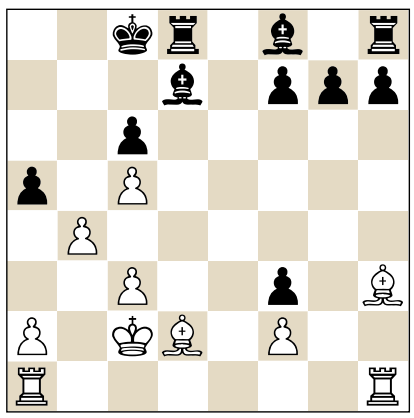


34.h4 ♕xd4!

And I won soon (0-1, 40).

This game also demonstrates the possible benefits of being in time-trouble. I think this is mostly to do with the fact that you will see your opponent getting restless. When players see their opponent getting low on time, they often become ambitious – frequently to the detriment of their positions. This is perfectly illustrated in the previous game. There is no need to decide whether you are better or not. Just play simple moves if nothing concrete is happening. And one last crucial rule, **Rule 4: Do not try to play good moves!** Trying to play good moves can lead you down a rabbit hole of calculations, confusion or just regret about missed opportunities.

David Howell
Parimarjan Negi
Biel 2010



position after 19.♔c2

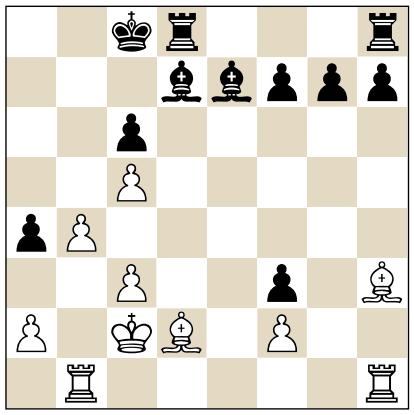
David Howell frequently gets into time-trouble, so he is certainly an expert in such situations. In this game, I had surprised David in the opening, enabling me to equalize easily. David had almost no time left here. Naturally, I was ambitious for more, even though I probably realized that, objectively, White was OK. This game is a particularly good example, since it illustrates almost all the points I have been making above. David is clearly not afraid of being in time-trouble, so Rule 1 was easily satisfied.

19...♗e7 20.♖ab1

White had many other moves here, which makes it easy to get bogged down in the options. It is easier to just decide on one of the possibilities, and this is clearly not a tactical blunder.

20...a4!

This was a good practical choice, since it prevents bxa5 ideas, and provokes White into planning b5. These b5 ideas clearly make sense for White – particularly since he has just played ♖ab1 – but they lead to complications – which would be good for me.



21.♖be1

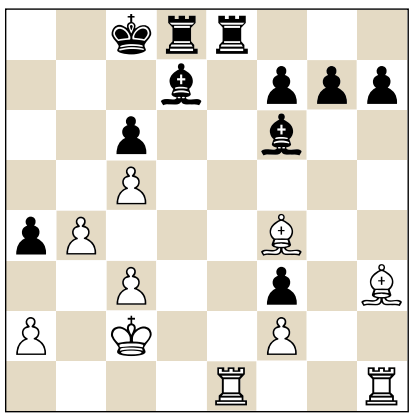
Objectively, this is dubious – but walking away from the tempting b5 ideas was, I think, an excellent practical choice. It isn't straightforward to calculate the consequences of an immediate b5 (as you can see below), and there were also more interesting variants, like ♗e3 or ♗f4 and then b5, which would actually be fine for White. But all these plans involve concrete calculation, and as per Rule 2, this isn't ideal when you are playing with just 30 seconds per move. Of course, White is

clearly wasting time – and ♖ab1 seems pretty stupid now – but... Rule 4: do not be afraid to make dubious decisions! After 21.b5 ♗xc5! 22.bxc6 ♗xh3 23.♖xh3 Black has 23...♖he8!, the only strong winning idea. Surprisingly, White's next move gets him mated: 24.♗f4 (24.♖xf3 ♖e2 is obviously bad) 24...♖e2+ 25.♔c1 ♗a3+.

21...♗f6 22.♗f4

Again just a random move, some kind of positional improvement but with no clear idea. That's not a problem, however.

22...♖he8

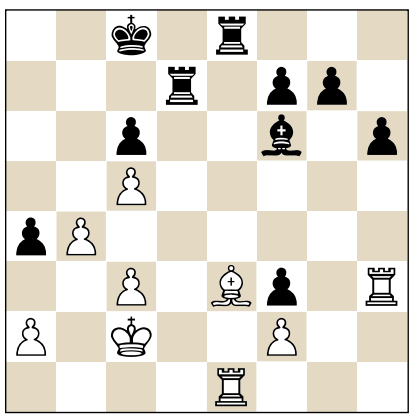


23.♗e3!

Rule 4 again! David immediately accepts that he has gone wrong – and avoids any weird messiness with ...♖e2, etc. White's play isn't impressive, but he is avoiding having to deal with forced calculations.

23...h6 24.♗xd7+ ♖xd7 25.♖h3

Going after the f3-pawn is the simplest thing he could have done.



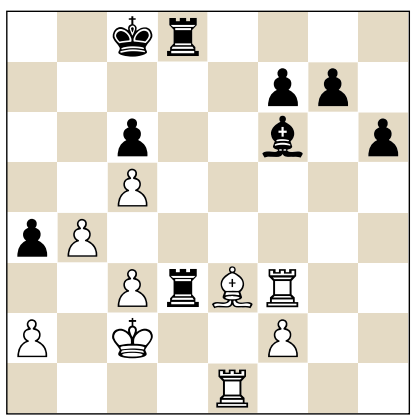
25...♖ed8?!

I thought the threat of 26...♖d3, winning an exchange, was very strong, but it leaves little room for White. Practically, he is almost forced to sacrifice an exchange, and it is easy to see that the ensuing endgame is not so terrible for White, since Black has no passed pawns. More crucially, however, forcing White into anything is a bad plan when you are playing against an opponent in time-trouble, because it makes his life easier. And you don't want that. Ideally, I should have continued making non-committal moves to give him ample opportunity to go wrong – as he did before with ♖be1 or ♗f4.

26.♖xf3

There were other moves, e.g. 26.♖b1 or 26.b5, while 26...♖d3 can be met by 27.♗d4!, which might be OK. But once again, if you can avoid doing concrete things, by all means do so.

26...♖d3



27.♖xf6!

White didn't have much choice, which makes such sacrifices easier.

27...gxf6 28.♗xh6

Black is doing just fine, but there is much less room for White to go wrong. Here is where I think he used Rule 3 – in the next few moves he doesn't do anything much – just putting pieces on nice, safe squares, clearly not hurting his position.

28...♖f3 29.♗e3 f5 30.♗d4

The ideal square for the bishop.

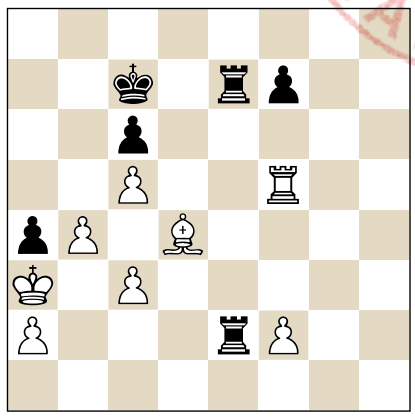
30...♔d7 31.♔b2!

Improving the king as well!

31...♖f4 32.♔a3 ♖e4 33.♖h1!

It was probably enough for him to think about the overall game situation to realize he didn't want to exchange rooks – so this move was an easy decision.

33...♖e2 34.♖h6 ♖de8 35.♖d6+ ♔c7 36.♖f6 ♖8e7 37.♖xf5



The rest of the game isn't important. Basically, we reached move 40, and I defended miserably and lost without much of a fight (1-0, 52).

As David Howell showed in the above game, you should be willing to play obviously dubious moves, e.g. 23.♖ab1 and then 21.♖be1 or 21.♗f4 and then 22.♗e3. What you shouldn't do is try and justify a bad plan, and continue to go for it just because you have played some move. This is the quickest way to get sucked into unnecessary calculations that will only lead to worse mistakes.

Conclusion

- Do not be scared.
- Do not calculate more than one to two moves ahead – your calculations should only be about identifying immediate tactical threats, not creating your own ones.
- Make 'safe' moves and, more importantly, look for 'safe' moves while your opponent is thinking instead of calculating. It is usually easy to find such moves if you aren't too ambitious.
- Be willing to make strategically obviously dubious moves. Once you are willing to make dubious moves, it becomes much easier to avoid tactical mishaps and survive even with just 30 seconds per move.
- Remember – in time-trouble the game is different. There can even be some advantages to having less time. ■

The last three Chinese to leave Tehran, a successful trio: Coach Yu Shaoteng, Tan Zhongyi and Cindy Li of the Chinese Chess Federation.

More than once her fate hung by a thread, but 25-year-old Tan Zhongyi refused to knuckle under. Displaying unflinching fighting spirit and admirable sangfroid, the 9th seed knocked out the top favourites to become China's fifth Women's World Champion. The championship in Tehran attracted worldwide attention because the participants were made to wear a hijab during play, and will continue to do so as the Iranians failed to pay the prize-fund, causing FIDE another headache.

by PENG ZHAOQIN

Tan Zhongyi has nine lives in controversial women's championship

Another World Champion from China

You can't say she was a bolt out of the blue. She was the girls' U-10 World Champion in 2000 and the U-12 champion in 2002; she was the 2015 Chinese Champion and won gold on Board 4 at the Baku Olympiad last year. Still, nobody was expecting Tan Zhongyi to become the 16th Women's World Champion. But she did it! After knocking out a group of elite players including ex-World Champion Anna Ushenina (Ukraine), top-seed Ju Wenjun (China), Harika Dronavalli (India) and, in the final, Anna Muzychuk (Ukraine). In six rounds, the new champion survived four tie-breaks and two Armageddon games.

Tan Zhongyi is the fifth Chinese to win the highest women's title after Xie Jun, Zhu Chen, Xu Yuhua and Hou Yifan. The latter protested against FIDE's unwillingness to restructure the World Championship system along the lines of the 'men's' cycle and decided to first drop out of the Women's Grand Prix series and then to leave the World Championship cycle as well.

It was a weird championship. Since the tournament took place in the Islamic Republic of Iran, all women were told to wear a hijab. Nazi Paikidze, the reigning US champion, publicly protested FIDE's decision to grant the championship to a country where women are forced to follow such rules and stayed at home. Quoting concerns about personal safety, former US Champion Irina Krush followed suit, and Mariya Muzychuk from Ukraine and Koneru Humpy from India, also withdrew because they didn't think Tehran a suitable venue.

The heated discussions in the press and on social media did not affect Tan Zhongyi's concentration. Said coach Yu Shaoteng: 'The Chinese delegation didn't pay much attention to other things than chess. If our players can just play safely, other conditions can easily be accepted.'

I am in contact with Yu Shaoteng regularly; we are old friends. We often talk on WeChat, a mega social medium in China. After the tournament, we had an extensive conversation about Tan Zhongyi's achievement.

With a rating of 2502, Tan Zhongyi arrived in Tehran as the 9th ranked player and the third highest rated Chinese player, behind the experienced Zhao Xue and rising star Ju Wenjun. Top-seed Ju Wenjun came in from Gibraltar, where she had done really well and won the £ 15,000 women's prize. In the process she beat Hou Yifan and crossed the 2600 mark for the first time in her life. Together with Anna Muzychuk and Harika, Ju Wenjun was the clear favourite for the title. As she left for Iran, Tan Zhongyi revealed to the Chinese press: 'I hope I can play better than the last time'. That 'last time' was in 2008, when Pia Cramling knocked her out in the second round.

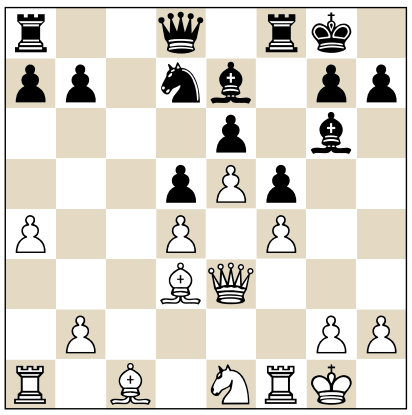
What was it that made her perform so well this time? Did she prepare better or differently? 'What was her secret?' I asked Yu Shaoteng. 'We did not have a magic potion. What she did was completely exploit all of her abilities and qualities', he explained. 'She was very consistent and competitive throughout the whole tournament. On many occasions, she showed a lot of resilience and resistance to stay in the match. Mentally she was very strong. She would remain calm while standing on the edge of defeat. Several times she was pushed into a "must win" situation and these, too, she overcame by showing strong nerves and remark-

able fighting spirit.' I could only agree. Ju Wenjun may have shown finer technique, but Tan Zhongyi proved a very hard nut to crack. Tan Zhongyi hails from Chongqing, a city famous for its Chongqing fondue, a spicy dish. Perhaps this partly explains her character.

Her play in the first round was not very convincing, as she eliminated Sabina-Francesca Foisor from the United States in the classical games. She was even worse in the second game, but somehow she escaped and advanced to the next round. For Sabina-Francesca, being in Tehran must have been tough and emotionally draining, as her mother, five-time Romanian champion and twice World Championship Candidate IM Cristina Foisor, had passed away just weeks before the championship. In honour of her career, FIDE decided to keep her in the roster and Sabina-Francesca played her games only metres away from her mother's empty chair.

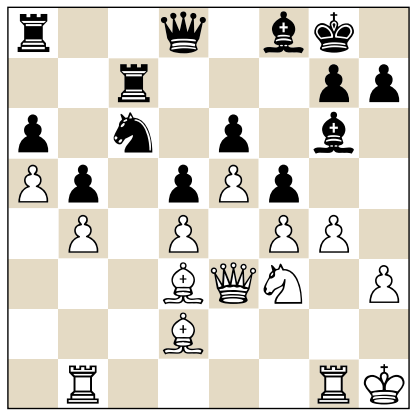
In the second round, Tan Zhongyi's opponent was former champion Anna Ushenina. Again her play wasn't very convincing and she lost the first game with the black pieces. But in this must-win situation she fought back in Game 2, showing great control over her nerves and a deep understanding of the position.

Tan Zhongyi
Anna Ushenina
Tehran 2017 (2.2)



position after 16...f5?!

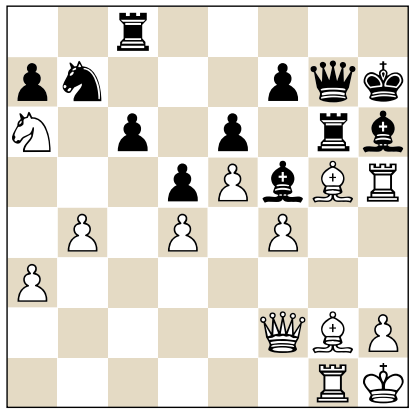
In a well-known theoretical position in the Slav, Ushenina has just committed a long-term strategic mistake with 16... f5?!, which gives White a firm centre and blocks her own bishop on g6. After **17.♗d2 ♘b8 18.b4 ♘c6 19.♘c2 a6 20.♔h1 ♕b6 21.♖ab1 ♖fc8 22.♖g1 ♗f8 23.h3 ♕d8 24.a5 ♖c7 25.♘e1 b6 26.♘f3 b5 27.g4**
White had gained total control over both flanks and could easily expand these advantages. Step by step, Tan Zhongyi built up a decisive attack to equalize the match and force a tie-break.



27...fxg4 28.♘g5 ♕e8 29.hxg4 h6 30.f5 ♗f7 31.♘f3 ♘e7 32.♖g2 ♔h8 33.♖h2 ♘g8 34.♖f1 ♖ac8 35.f6 ♖c4 36.g5 ♗xb4 37.♗xb4 ♖xb4 38.fxg7+ ♔xg7 39.gxh6+ ♔h8 40.♕g1 1-0.

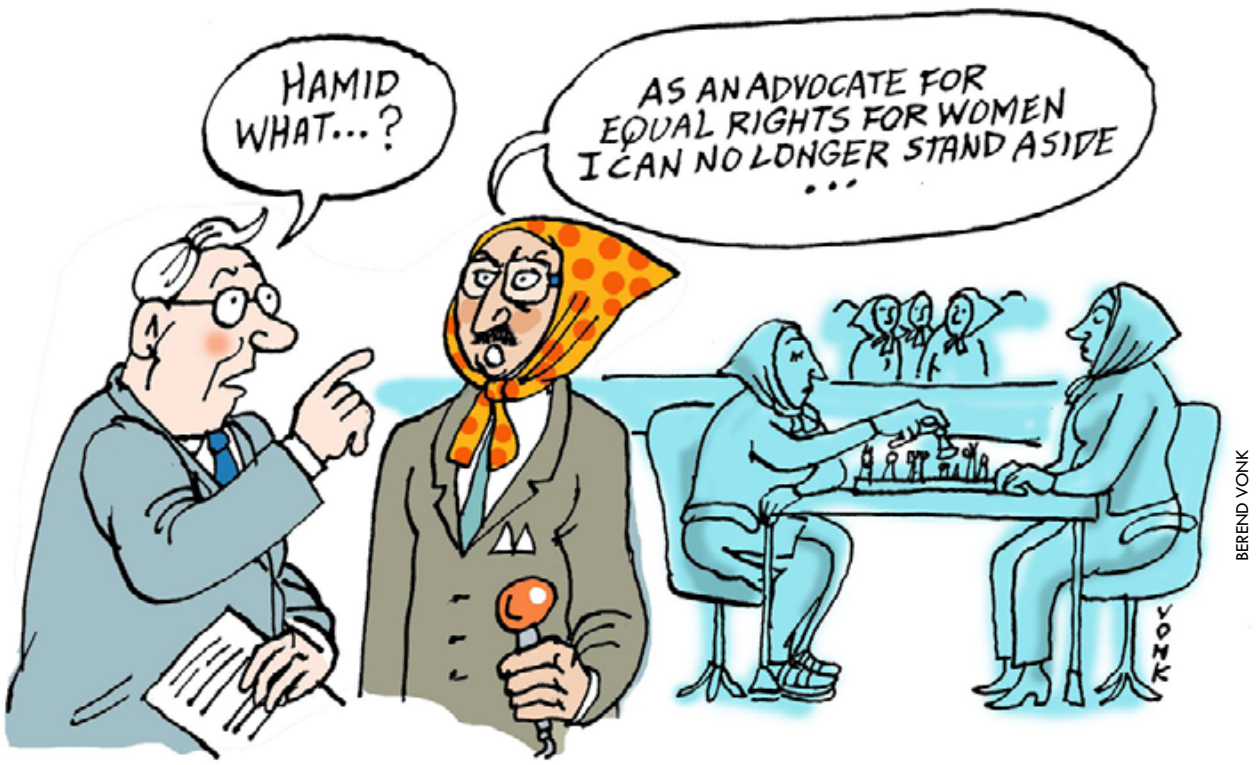
In the tie-break, Tan Zhongyi also lost the first game, but fought back to win the second one, showing great technical endgame skill. The players reached the Armageddon game, which Ushenina needed to win with the white pieces, while a draw sufficed for Tan Zhongyi to proceed to the next round.

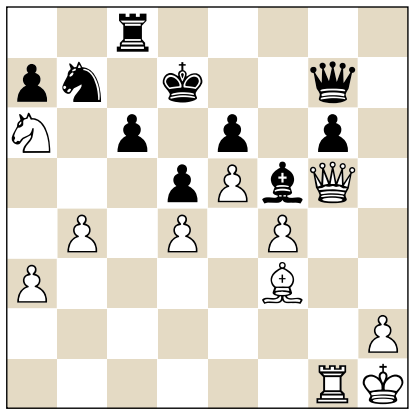
Anna Ushenina
Tan Zhongyi
Tehran 2017 (2, Armageddon)



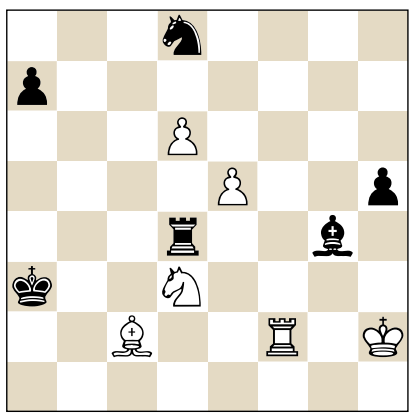
position after 38.♕f2

The opening has not gone well for Black and White is winning. The black knight is badly placed on b7 and the black king is unsafe. But Tan Zhongyi refused to give up and brought her king to safety.
38...♔g8 39.♗f3 ♗xg5 40.♖hxg5 ♔f8 41.♕h4 ♔e8 42.♖xg6 fxg6 43.♕g5 ♔d7





Black has managed to hold on, but her problems have not yet been solved. White still has winning chances with 44.♖g3, then ♗g4, exchanging the bishops and exploiting the weaknesses of the e6- and g6-pawns. For some reason, Ushenina started playing inaccurately and let her opponent slip away.



position after 62...♘d8

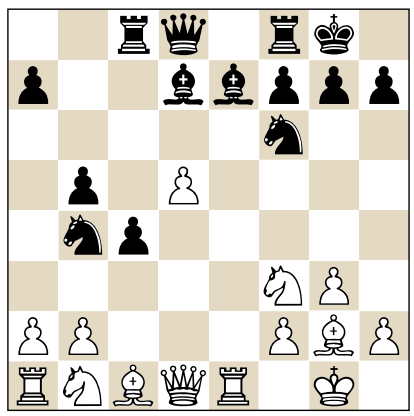
And this was the dramatic finish. Tan Zhongyi's king has gone too far and is in great trouble. Here, Ushenina could have decided the game with 63.♖f1 preparing 64.♖a1 mate. After 63...♔a2 64.♖b1 preparing 65.♘c1+ ♔a3 66.♖b3+ ♔a4, White wins material by a discovered check. But Ushenina didn't see it and the game ended in a draw after 77 moves and Tan Zhongyi went through to the third round. 'Her king was very exposed and her position was going down, while my blood pressure went up, but she stubbornly held on!' Yu Shaoteng said after the game.

Round 3 saw another tiebreak for Tan Zhongyi and a shaky start against Rout Padmini from India. After a loss in the first rapid game, she was in a 'must-win situation' for the third time. In the next two games, in both of which she was White, she found her way back and showed a better understanding of the Queen's Gambit Accepted to eliminate the tactically strong Indian IM.

Of the seven Chinese players present in Tehran, three qualified for the quarter-finals. Twenty-year-old WGM Ni Shiqun was to play ex-World Champion Alexandra Kosteniuk from Russia, while Ju Wenjun and Tan Zhongyi faced each other. By this time, Tan Zhongyi was beginning to get real attention, and it may well have been the key moment for her to gain self-confidence and fight for the title. In the first game, with White, she played strongly and was close to winning, but Ju Wenjun solved her problems with great defensive skill. In the second game, Tan Zhongyi surprised her opponent in the opening.

Ju Wenjun
Tan Zhongyi
Tehran 2017 (4.2)
Open Catalan

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 d5 4.♘f3 dxc4 5.♗g2 c5 6.0-0 ♘c6 7.♕a4 ♗d7 8.♕xc4 b5 9.♕d3 c4 10.♕d1 ♖c8 11.♖e1 ♗e7 12.e4 0-0 In this line of the Catalan, the more common move is 12...♘b4. Ju Wenjun thought for a long time and after **13.d5 exd5 14.exd5 ♘b4** a crucial moment arrived.



A well-prepared Tan Zhongyi has lured her opponent into a sharp and

DAVID LLADA

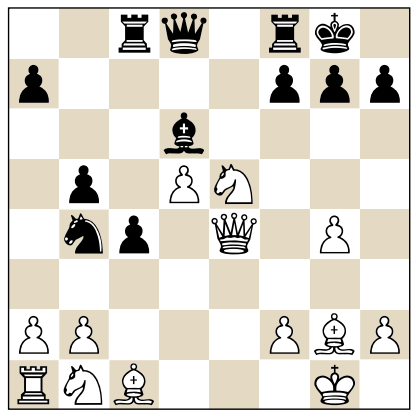
Following her success in Gibraltar, top-seed Ju Wenjun was the big favourite, but…

complicated position and forces her to play aggressively, which is against Ju Wenjun's nature. She generally prefers positional play and hardly ever takes risks in the opening. With her next move, Ju Wenjun showed that she was surprised and wanted to avoid Black's preparation.

15.♘e5?

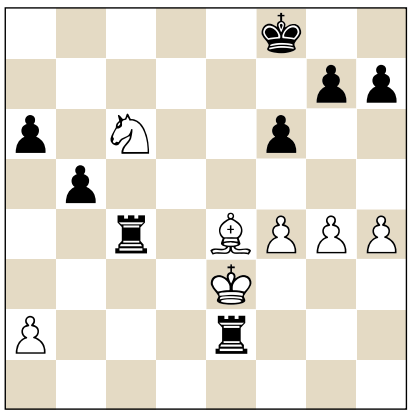
Necessary was 15.d6, when after 15...♗xd6 16.♕xd6 ♘c2 17.♘a3 ♘xa1, White would have had good fighting chances for a draw in an unbalanced position.

15...♗f5 16.g4 ♗c2 17.♕f3 ♗e4 18.♖xe4 ♘xe4 19.♕xe4 ♗d6



White is terribly undeveloped on the queenside and Black will easily win back the sacrificed material and have a huge advantage.

20.♗d2 ♖e8 21.f4 f6 22.♗xb4 ♗xb4 23.d6 ♕xd6 24.♕d5+ ♕xd5 25.♗xd5+ ♔f8 26.♘c6 ♖e1+ 27.♔f2 ♖ce8 28.♘xb4 ♖8e2+ 29.♔f3 ♖xb2 30.♘c6 c3 31.♘xc3 ♖xa1 32.♔e3 ♖e1+ 33.♔f3 ♖d2 34.♗e4 a6 35.h4 ♖c1 36.♘e2 ♖c4 37.♔e3 ♖xe2+



White resigned.

Speaking to the press, Yu Shaoteng said: 'Tan Zhongyi was well prepared and played very well. The outcome was logical.' The happy winner revealed that she had woken up at four in the morning thinking about the game. Her strategy had been to make a draw and put her hopes on the tie-break, since she had beaten Ju Wenjun a couple of times in a rapid game. But things went even better for her!

It had been over 12 days from the start of the tournament to the semi-final matches, and almost all of the players had left for home. In the Chinese camp, only coach Yu Shaoteng and Chinese federation officer Cindy Li were still around to keep Tan Zhongyi company. The ladies had no problem with the hijab but had enough of mint-flavoured dumplings! They missed Chinese food and tried to cook themselves. For them their culinary creations were fine, but Yu Shaoteng was less enthusiastic. 'After many days with only rice gruel, noodles and dry vegetables, I felt weak and needed some power food', he laughed. 'Meat, of course.'

Four players were left to compete for the chess crown: Anna Muzychuk met Alexandra Kosteniuk, while Tan Zhongyi faced Harika. Here's a thorough analysis of their first game by Yu Shaoteng.

'Tan Zhongyi had barely survived her match against Ushenina, so an old Chinese expression applied: once you survive, a blessing will be yours.'

NOTES BY
Yu Shaoteng

Tan Zhongyi
Harika Dronavalli
Tehran 2017 (5.1)
Nimzo-Indian, Keres Variation

There were two interesting semi-finals in the Women's World Championship in Tehran: a European clash between Anna Muzychuk and Alexandra Kosteniuk, and an Asian battle between Tan Zhongyi and Harika Dronavalli. In the match Tan-Harika, the chances of the latter seemed slightly better, since the Indian master had reached the semi-finals for the third time, whereas Tan's best result in the World Championship had been reaching the second round in 2008, when she was knocked out by Pia Cramling. But being the underdog gives you psychological advantages, and in a knock-out match you surely need some luck, too. Tan Zhongyi had barely survived her match against Ushenina, so an old Chinese expression applied: once you survive, a blessing will be yours.

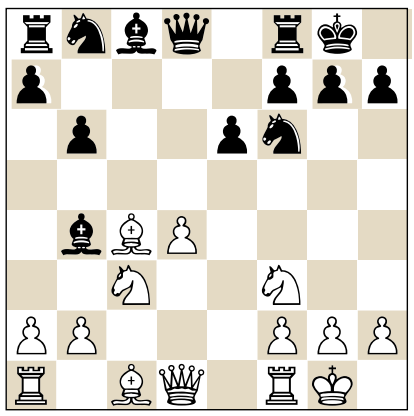
1.d4 e6

Harika's opening choice was a bit surprising sometimes. She is quite flexible and doesn't mind allowing the game to transpose to the French Defence.

2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0

A Nimzo-Indian has been reached. Harika had played 4...b6 twice in this tournament. I suppose she must have been worried about our preparation.

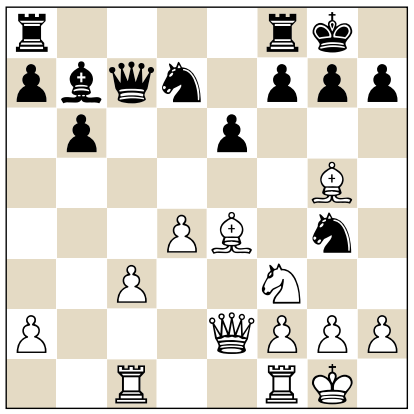
5.♗d3 c5 6.♘f3 d5 7.0-0 cxd4 8.exd4 dxc4 9.♗xc4 b6



A classical variation. Such opening strategy is wise. Black should choose a solid approach in such a knock-out match.

10.♗g5 ♗b7 11.♕e2 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 ♘bd7 13.♗d3 ♕c7 14.♖ac1 ♘g4 A common way, with the idea to get rid of White's bishop pair. An alternative is 14...♖fe8 15.♖fe1 h6 16.♗d2 ♖ad8 17.♘e5 ♘xe5 18.dxe5? (18.♕xe5 ♕xe5 19.♖xe5 is equal) 18...♕c6! 19.f3 ♘g4!, Tan Zhongyi- Gunina, Moscow 2016.

15.♗e4



15...♖fe8!?

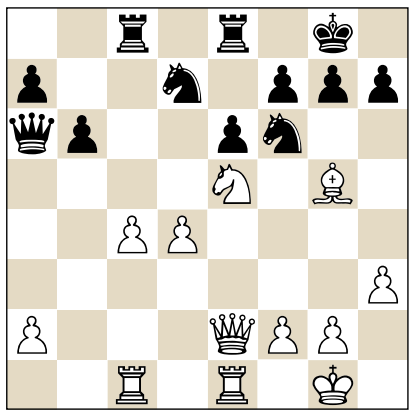
More accurate was 15...♗xe4 16.♕xe4 ♘gf6 17.♕e2 ♖ac8 18.c4 h6 19.♗h4 ♕b7 20.♖fe1 ♖fe8 21.a4 ♕a6 22.♕a2 ♖c6 23.♕b3 ♖ec8, with an equal position, Radjabov-Kramnik, London 2013.

16.h3 A normal response. But White can also consider 16.♗f4!? ♕xf4 17.♗xb7 ♖ab8 18.g3 ♕c7 19.♗a6, and White is better.

16...♗xe4 17.♕xe4 ♘gf6 18.♕e2 ♖ac8 19.c4 ♕b7

Preparing ...♕a6 and doubling the rooks on c-file, targeting the c-pawn. Black can also consider 19...e5!?, for example 20.d5 h6 21.♗e3 ♘c5 22.♘d2 ♘b7, with an equal position. 19...h6 is not bad either.

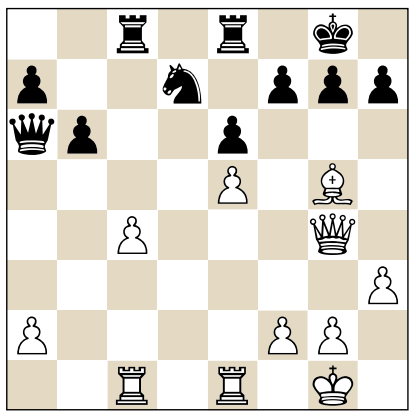
20.♖fe1 ♕a6 21.♘e5



21...♘xe5!? Harika must have been too optimistic about her position to exchange the knights. Preferable was 21...♕a4 22.♗xf6 ♘xf6 23.♕f3 ♖c7, keeping the balance.

22.dxe5!? Tan Zhongyi goes for an unbalanced position, seeing attacking chances on the kingside and ignoring her fragmented pawn structure. The simple 22.♕xe5 ♘d7 23.♕g3 ♘f8 (23...♖xc4? 24.♗h6 g6 25.♕d6, winning) 24.♕b3 h6 would have created no problems for Black.

22...♘d7 23.♕g4

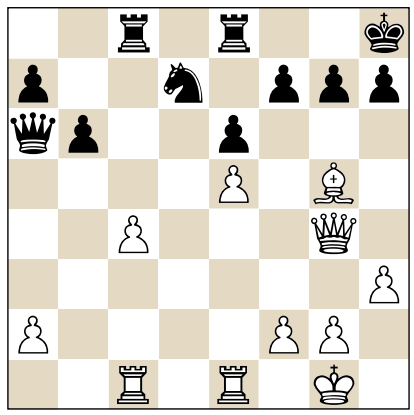


23...♔h8 Capturing the pawn with 23...♕xa2? is too greedy: after 24.♗h6 g6 25.♕f4 White is winning.

DAVID LLADA

As on earlier occasions, Harika Dronavalli could rely on the moral support of her grandmother.

24.♕h5 ♔g8 24...g6 is bad due to 25.♕h6. **25.♕g4 ♔h8**



26.♖e4!

Before I saw 26.♖e4, I thought it would be a draw by repetition. But Tan Zhongyi showed her fighting spirit and was not yet satisfied with a draw. This move was not risky at all and very effective. It put huge psychological pressure on her opponent.

26...♕a3?

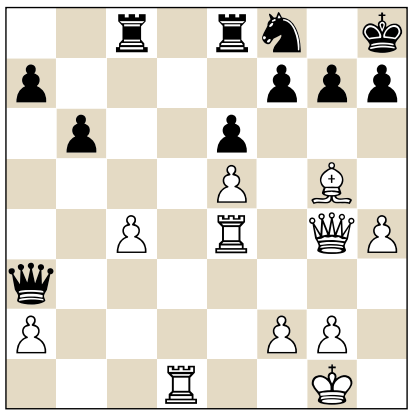
A strategic error by Harika! The purpose of this move is unclear. It seems like a waste of time and it gave White a free hand to build up an attack.

I didn't see what was wrong with simply capturing the pawn: 26...♕xa2 27.♕d1 ♘f8! 28.♖a1 ♕b2 29.♖xa7 ♖a8, with equality, or 26...♖c5 27.♕f4 ♔g8 28.♕g4 ♔h8! (not capturing the pawn with 28...♘xe5 29.♖xe5 ♖xe5 30.♗f6+ or 28...♖xe5 29.♗h6 g6 30.♖xe5 ♘xe5 31.♕f4, of course, when White is winning) 29.♕f4. With some weak pawns, White should accept a draw.

27.♖d1 ♘f8 Bad is 27...♘xe5? 28.♖xe5 f6 29.♗c1!, and White wins a piece.

28.h4!

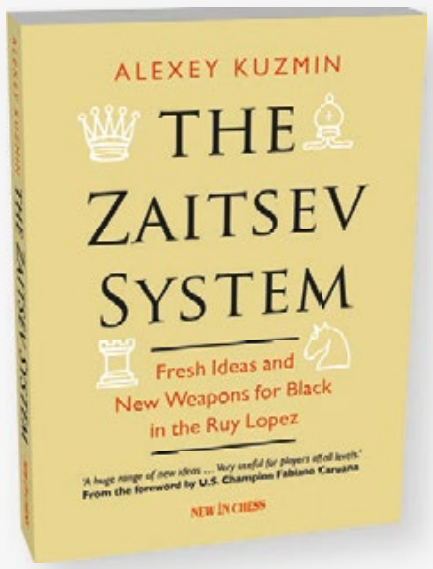
A good move! Without the help of the pawn it's very difficult to break through Black's defence.



28...♕c3?

Harika has played inaccurately here and White can easily maintain an advantage. In fact, this move is very dangerous for Black. More tenacious was 28...h6!? 29.♕h5 ♘h7 30.♗e3 ♖c7 31.♖ed4 ♕e7 (capturing the pawn would be bad: 31...♕xa2? 32.♖d8 ♕a4 33.♖1d4!, preparing c5. Black's knight is badly placed and White would have a long-term advantage) 32.♖1d3 ♖ec8 33.♗d2, preparing a3 and ♗b4, with a slight advantage for White. Anyway,

ALEXEY KUZMIN HAS DONE THE IMPOSSIBLE!



Grandmaster **Alexey Kuzmin** has done the impossible: he has created a book that elite Grandmasters and their seconds cannot afford to miss, and that at the same time helps amateurs who have never plaid the Zaitsev before, to get started.

"A huge range of new ideas.
Very useful for players of all levels."
Fabiano Caruana

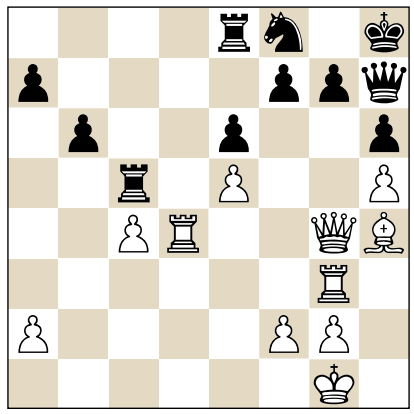
"Invaluable novelties and advice. Kuzmin not only looks at the soundness of various lines, but also at the likelihood that it will create practical problems for the opponent (..) Not many works are as lucid as this one. A great read, a fascinating variation and a skillful author."
Glenn Flear

"A very useful educational tool for people starting out with the Zaitsev System. Contains a wealth of original ideas which makes it also a very useful source for preparation, even for tournaments of the highest calibre."
Peter Svidler

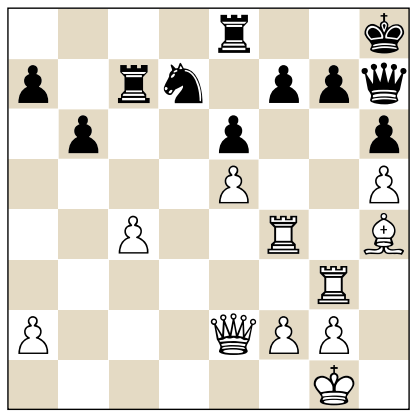
With a special Introduction by Igor Zaitsev himself!

paperback | 256 pages | €27.95
available at your local (chess)bookseller or at www.newinchess.com

I think it would be very difficult for the players to figure out everything correctly on the board.
29.h5 h6 30.♗h4! ♖c7 31.♖ed4 ♕c2 32.♖1d3! ♖c5 33.♖g3 ♕h7



34.♖f4 A far simpler win for White was 34.♕f3 ♕f5 (34...♖c7 35.♗f6, and wins) 35.♖f4 ♕xe5 36.♖xf7 ♕a1+ (or 36...♖xc4 37.♖xf8+ ♖xf8 38.♕xf8+ ♔h7 39.f4, winning) 37.♔h2 ♖f5 38.♕b7 ♖xf7 39.♕xf7 ♖c8 40.♖xg7 ♕xg7 41.♗f6.
34...♖c7 35.♕f3 ♘d7 36.♕e2!
Tan Zhongyi keeps her cool! It was close to the first time-control, and both players only had a few minutes left.
I was afraid of 36.♖xf7? ♕b1+! 37.♔h2 ♘xe5 38.♖f8+ ♔h7! 39.♕f4 ♖xf8 40.♕xf8 ♕e4 41.♗e7 ♘g4+ 42.♔h3 ♘xf2+ 43.♕xf2 ♖xe7, when the tables would have been turned and Harika would have won.

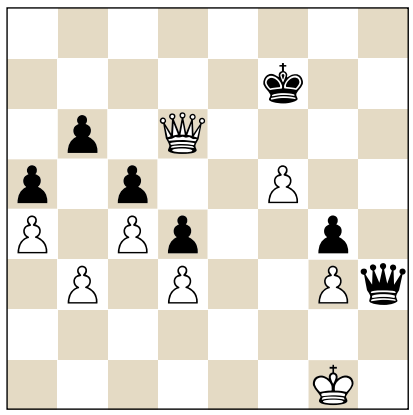


36...♖f8 A desperate move, but there was no way to save the game. For instance, 36...g5 37.hxg6 fxg6 38.♕f3 or 36...♖ec8 37.♗e7! ♘xe5 38.♖xg7 ♕xg7 39.♗f6, and White wins.
37.♗e7 ♖g8 38.♗d6 ♖cc8 39.♖xf7 ♕b1+ 40.♔h2 ♘c5 41.♕e3 ♕h7 42.♖g6 a5 43.♗e7 ♖c7 44.♖xh6 Black resigned.

■ ■ ■

In Game 2, Harika had problems mating her opponent with a knight and a bishop against a lonely king. Five moves more and a draw could have been claimed, but the Indian GM finally managed to win after 162 moves and 6 hours of play. This semi-final was eventually decided in the tie-break by a cruel Armageddon game.

Harika Dronavalli
Tan Zhongyi
Tehran 2017 (5, Armageddon)



position after 68...♔f7

This was the second Armageddon game for the Chinese. Again she had Black and again she had a losing position. If Harika had played 69.♕e6+ ♔f8 70.♕f6+, followed by 71.♕h4 to swap the queens, she would have won the game and the match. Instead, she played **69.f6?** destroying every hope of going through to the final. Tan Zhongyi played **69...♕h6!** preparing perpetual check on the c1-h6 diagonal. Now 70.♕f4 will be met by 70...♕xf4 71.gxf4 ♔xf6, and it will just be a draw.

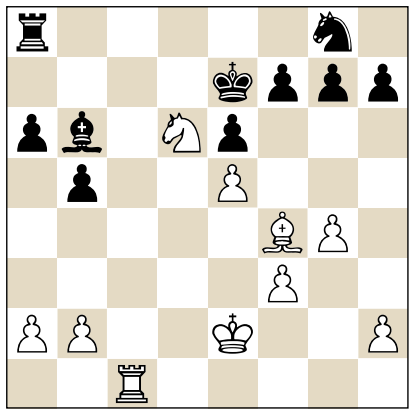
Tan Zhongyi eventually won on time on move 99. In an interview she said: 'I feel very sorry for my opponent. I think she played well and had really good chances in the blitz games.' It was one of the most dramatic matches of the Championship. 'God blessed our player!' a relieved Yu Shaoteng commented.

The Final

After a break of just one day, the four-game final started. Tan Zhongyi's opponent was Anna Muzychuk. Their roads to the final could not have been more different. Whereas Tan Zhongyi needed a total of 28 games and a lot of effort to reach the final, Muzychuk had breezed through the matches, scoring an amazing 9 out of 10 without a single tie-break. The odds were clearly not in Tan Zhongyi's favour.

After a peaceful draw in a French Defence in the first game, Tan Zhongyi was White against Muzychuk's Semi-Slav. After the queen swap the position seemed to be heading for a draw, until Muzychuk misplaced her knight on its starting square g8 and Tan Zhongyi was clearly better.

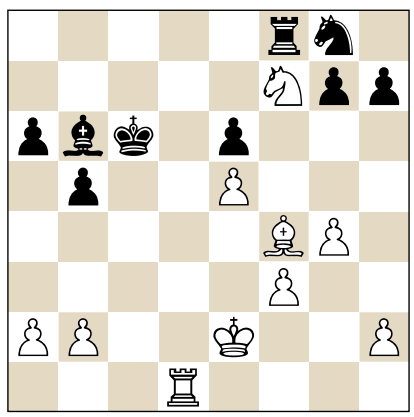
Tan Zhongyi
Anna Muzychuk
Tehran 2017 (Final-2)



position after 24.♖c1

Now, in an attempt to free the knight, Muzychuk sacrificed the f7-pawn and played **24...♔d7** Tan Zhongyi took it with **25.♘xf7** after carefully calculating the variations after 25...♖f8, attacking two pieces.

Unfortunately for Muzychuk, 25...♖f8 does not win a piece due to 26.♖d1+ ♔c6 (26...♔c7 27.♘g5, threatening 28.♘xe6+; 26...♔c8 27.♘d6+; 26...♔e7 27.♘d6 ♖xf4 28.♘c8+, winning the bishop back)



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

27.♗e3! (preparing 28.♖d6+) 27...♗xe3 28.♘d8+ ♖xd8 29.♖xd8, with a double attack.

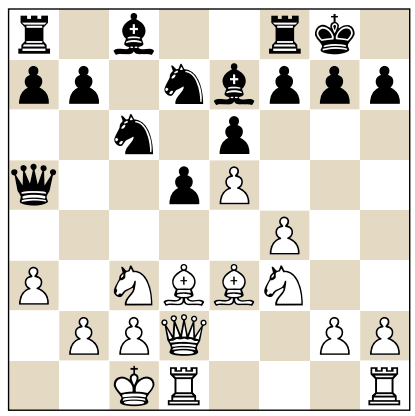
The Chinese WGM showed her fine endgame skills and scored a win after 56 moves. It was not a welcome birthday gift for Anna Muzychuk, who turned 27 that day.

But in Game 3, the Ukraine GM hit back with an elegant sacrifice on h7 in a French main line.

Anna Muzychuk
Tan Zhongyi
Tehran 2017 (Final-3)
French Defence, Steinitz Variation

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♗e3 ♗e7 8.♕d2 0-0 9.dxc5 ♗xc5 10.0-0-0 ♕a5 11.a3 ♗e7 12.♗d3?!

More accurate is 12.h4, and only 13.♗d3 after 12...a6.



12...a6? Required was 12...♘c5, chasing the bishop away from the dangerous b1-h7 diagonal.

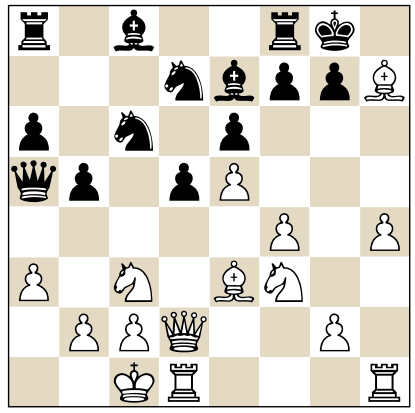
13.h4

Now ♗xh7+ is unstoppable, since 13...♘c5 comes too late: 14.♗xh7+! ♔xh7 15.♘g5+ ♔g8 16.♕e2 g6 17.h5 ♗xg5 18.hxg6 fxg6 19.♕g4, and there is no defence for Black.

13...b5?

This makes life even easier for White. 13...f6 should have been played.

14.♗xh7+!



This is, in fact, a very typical attacking method in the French. White opens the h-file and Black is absolutely defenceless against it.

14...♔xh7 15.♕d3+! ♔g8 16.♘g5 f5

16...♗xg5 17.hxg5 ♖d8 18.♕h7+ ♔f8 19.f5 exf5 20.♘xd5 is not much different from the game.

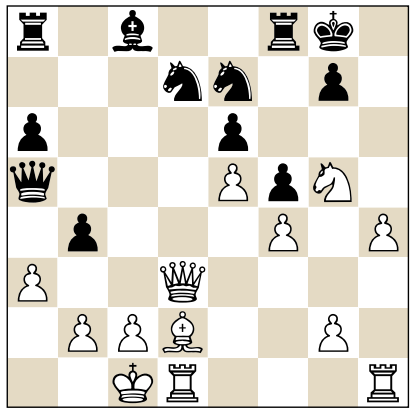
17.♘xd5!

There was another (known) way to win: 17.♕e2 ♗xg5 18.hxg5 g6 19.♕f3 ♘e7 20.♘xd5 ♘xd5 21.♖xd5 ♔f7 22.♖dd1 1-0, which happened in a game Zaas-Greig, ICCF email 2014.

17...b4 18.♘xe7+ ♘xe7 19.♗d2?

Here 19.♕d6 bxa3 20.bxa3 was winning for White.

Whereas Tan Zhongyi needed a total of 28 games to reach the final, Muzychuk had scored an amazing 9 out of 10 without a single tie-break.



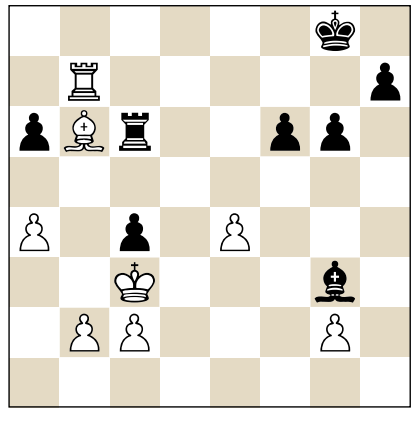
19...♖b8?
Missing her chance to crawl back into the game: 19...♘d5 20.♕e2 (but not 20.♘xe6? ♘xe5! 21.fxe5 ♗xe6, and the tables are turned) 20...♖a7! 21.♕h5 ♘7f6, and by giving back a piece Black could fight for a draw.
20.♕d6 Now the game is over. The damage is done and the black position collapses quickly. The rest is a matter of technique.
20...♕c5 21.♗xb4 ♕xd6 22.♗xd6 ♘g6 23.♘xe6 ♖e8 24.♗xb8 ♖xe6 25.g3 ♗b7 26.♖h2 ♘c5 27.♖d8+ ♔h7 28.♗d6 ♘e4 29.h5 ♘h8 30.h6 ♘f7 31.♖d7 ♖xd6 32.♖xf7
Black resigned.

After Muzychuk had levelled the score with one game to go with the classical time control, Yu Shaoteng commented: 'Tan Zhongyi hadn't played many French games so far and she wasn't alert enough for these typical sacrifices.'

Game 4 ended in a quick draw. Tan Zhongyi played safely and avoided taking risks. She preferred to test Anna Muzychuk in rapid games, since she had overpowered all her opponents in the tie-breaks. However, Muzychuk, the reigning World Champion in both blitz and rapid, seemed to have the same idea, thinking it was to her advantage to enter into this accelerated playoff.

After 20 days of play the last tie-break of the tournament started. Having had no time to solve her French opening problems, Tan Zhongyi switched to the Petroff in the first game, but still found herself in deep trouble and got a worse endgame.

Anna Muzychuk
Tan Zhongyi
Tehran 2017 (Final, Tiebreak 1)



position after 37...♗g3

Here Muzychuk could have played

DGT PI – CHESS COMPUTER FOR DGT E-BOARDS

DGT Pi is a chess computer that turns your e-Board into your strongest sparring partner. Eight different chess engines are included offering a variety of strengths and playing styles to enjoy.

Simply set up the board, connect DGT Pi and start playing. The computer moves are shown on the large display.

DGT Pi is a great tool for playing chess, for training and for analyzing games and positions over the board, using a traditional wooden chessboard and pieces. Chess engines included are StockFish, Texel, Arasan, Rodent II, Zurichess, Floyd, Cinnamon and Claudia.

DGT Pi can also be used as a fully functional DGT3000 chess clock. Price €275.

available at
www.newinchess.com

DGT

38.a5, followed by ♖a7, to capture the a6-pawn. I really don't see how Black can stop White's a-pawn from queening. But it didn't happen and Tan Zhongyi escaped once again. Like a cat with nine lives.

In the second rapid game it was Tan Zhongyi who had the better chances, and little by little she pushed Muzychuk to the edge.

DAVID LLADA

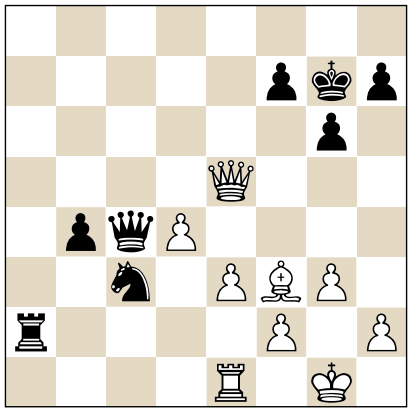
Having survived 28 games, Tan Zhongyi faced the last hurdle, Anna Muzychuk, in the final.

Tehran 2017

6 rounds of knock-out

Round 2	
Ju Wenjun-Zhu Chen	1½-½
Bodnaruk-Girya	0-2
Zhao Xue-Padmini	1-3
Tan Zhongyi-Ushenina	4½-4½
Harika-Saduakassova	2½-1½
Buksa-Guramishvili	2½-3½
Dzagnidze-Zimina	2-0
Shen Yang-Savina	1½-½
A.Muzychuk-Kashlinskaya	1½-½
Goryachkina-Pham Le Thang Nguyen	½-1½
Stefanova-Melia	2½-1½
Batsiashvili-Khurtsidze	4-5
Kosteniuk-Gaponenko	2½-1½
Paehtz-Cramling	1-3
Gunina-Ni Shiqun	0-2
Pogonina-Huang Qian	3½-2½
Round 3	
Ju Wenjun-Girya	3½-2½
Padmini-Tan Zhongyi	2½-3½
Harika-Guramishvili	3½-2½
Dzagnidze-Shen Yang	1½-½
A.Muzychuk-Pham Le Thang Nguyen	2-0
Stefanova-Khurtsidze	1½-½
Kosteniuk-Cramling	4-2
Ni Shiqun-Pogonina	1½-½
Round 4 Quarter Finals	
Ju Wenjun-Tan Zhongyi	½-1½
Harika-Dzagnidze	2½-1½
A.Muzychuk-Stefanova	1½-½
Kosteniuk-Ni Shiqun	1½-½
Round 5 Semi-Finals	
Tan Zhongyi-Harika	5-4
A.Muzychuk-Kosteniuk	2-0
Final	
Tan Zhongyi-A.Muzychuk	3½-2½

Tan Zhongyi
Anna Muzychuk
Tehran 2017 (Final, Tiebreak 2)



position after 39.♕e5+

The game had been a great fight and now, under strong pressure, Muzychuk made her final mistake, although the position was already dangerous for Black. She should have played 39...♔g8, keeping her king and the game alive and hoping to create counterplay with the b-pawn. Instead, she walked her king into a mating net with **39...♔h6??** And after **40.g4 f6 41.♕xf6 ♖a5 42.h4** the game, the match and the championship were over!

At the end of her 34-game marathon, most of them rapid and blitz games, Tan Zhongyi was the new champion. On her return to China she told journalists: 'Teacher Ye (GM Ye Jiangchuan, Secretary of the Chinese Chess Federation and the national team chief coach – PZ) regularly plays blitz games with me. It must have been nearly thousand games! I'm very grateful to him.'

For Yu Shaoteng, the key factors of her success were: golden age, hard labour, experience, fighting spirit, consistency, persistence and nerves made of steel!

The championship was widely covered by the Chinese media. There were press releases every day from CCTV (China's biggest broadcasting network) in Tehran and many followed Tan Zhongyi's thrilling games with great excitement. It was like gambling; you never knew what would happen in the next few seconds.

The new champion is expected to defend her title in a match against her teammate Ju Wenjun, the winner of the 2016 Grand Prix, in 2018, so the next Women's World Champion will be Chinese too. Still, Ye Jiangchuan has a clear next goal: a Chinese overall World Champion! ■

Judit Polgar

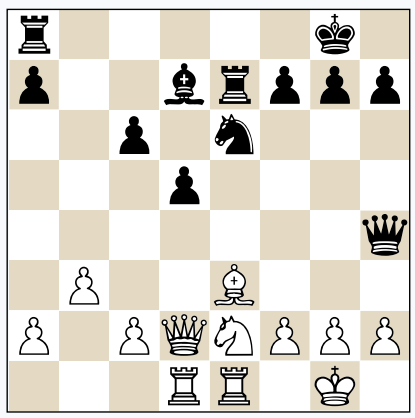
Queen trapping

Anatoly Karpov has been an inspiration in many ways for generations of players. **JUDIT POLGAR** recalls how she was particularly attracted by the former World Champion's nose for trapping queens.

Although from time to time he is still active as a player, Anatoly Karpov can safely be called a living legend these days. But when I started playing chess, he was the World Champion and he remained one of the two strongest players on the planet long after I had become a grandmaster. It goes without saying that I studied his old and new games carefully. One of the most striking aspects of Karpov's play is his unique feel for the global harmony of the position. His pieces would perfectly divide the positional tasks, thus establishing Karpov's trademark domination over the whole board. I was amused to find several positions in Karpov's games in which the enemy queen was trapped out of the blue. Her Majesty is a very mobile piece, and immobilizing her requires perfect piece coordination. True, the actual trapping of the queen rarely occurred on the board, because of the strength of Karpov's opponents, but many of his comments ended with trapped queens, showing that for him this was a constant preoccupation.

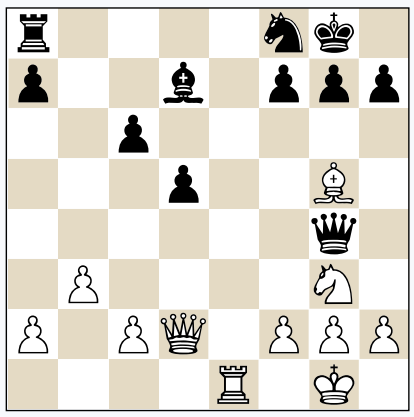
Here is a perfect example of how this hidden tactical detail served the purpose of his positional manoeuvring:

Anatoly Karpov
Viktor Kortchnoi
Merano 1981 (second match game)



position after 19...♖e7

Karpov writes that his main plan was based on transferring the knight to d3, where it would control several important dark squares. But for the time being he was concerned by Black's counterplay based on ...♖ae8 and ...♘f4, so he temporarily directed the knight to the kingside.
20.♘g3! Threatening 21.♘f5 and under certain circumstances ♗g5. The latter requires some explaining: if it was White's turn, 21.♗g5 does not work due to 21...♘xg5 22.♖xe7 ♘f3!+, retrieving the exchange while spoiling the kingside structure.
20...♕f6 Relatively best. 20...g6 chronically weakens the kingside while White could also increase his advantage with 21.c4, given that opening the d-file with 21...dxc4? allows 22.♗g5 ♘xg5 23.♖xe7 ♘f3+ 24.gxf3 ♕xe7 25.♕xd7, winning. But the most beautiful variation arises after 20...♘f8 21.♗g5 ♖xe1+ 22.♖xe1 ♕g4:

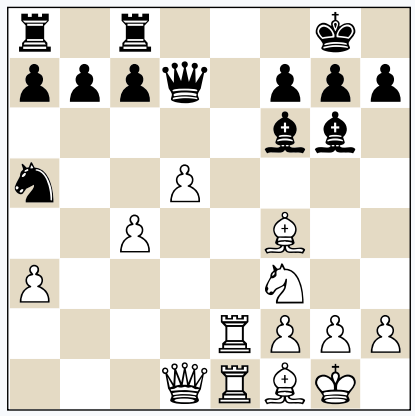


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The queen is suddenly trapped with either 23.h3 or 23.f3. This is a perfect illustration of how White's pieces control all the squares needed for the queen's escape. It also demonstrates how the result of a purely positional struggle sometimes depends on tactical details.
After the move in the game Karpov played a few consolidating moves (f2-f3, ♗e3-f2), and then finally transferred the knight to d3, retaining a slight but persistent advantage.

This was an instructive example, but it was far more fun (not for his opponent, evidently) when Karpov actually trapped the queen in a game.

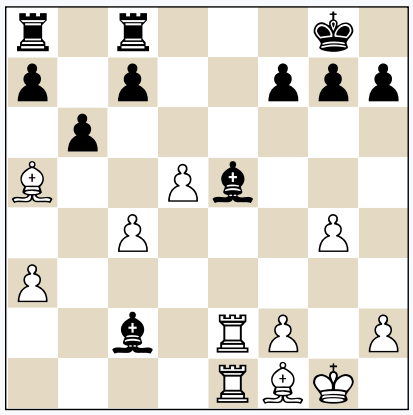
Anatoly Karpov
Lajos Portisch
Lucerne Olympiad 1982



position after 19...♖ec8

White has an overwhelming advantage, but neither player will have suspected that the game would end so soon.
20.♘e5 ♕f5? Striving for counterplay based on the hanging f4-bishop, but fail-

ing to notice the net around the queen.
21.♗d2! Suddenly the knight is hanging and the threat g2-g4 is decisive. A typical situation when the queen is the most advanced (and only seemingly active) piece on a populated board.
21...♘xc4 Desperation. The point is that 21...b6 22.g4 forces 22...♕c2 23.♕xc2 ♗xc2 24.♗xa5 ♗xe5

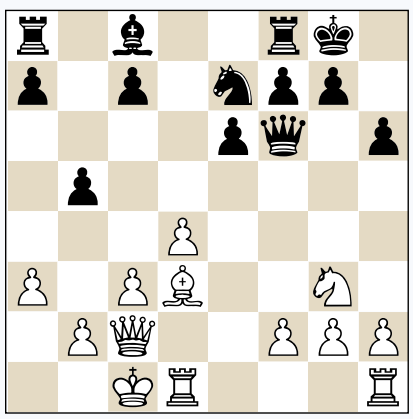


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

25.♖xc2! (Karpov). Instructive task splitting between the rooks.
There was nothing wrong with 22.♘xc4 now, but Black would get two pawns for the piece with 22...♕xd5. Karpov played even more strongly:
22.g4! And Portisch resigned after a few unnecessary moves.

These examples were highly inspiring and I seem to have been as 'productive' with actual queen trapping as Karpov was in his comments. Here is a game I played at the age of eight. It bears a strong resemblance to the first example.

Judit Polgar
Velichka Frangova
Teteven 1984



The b-pawn is taboo due to the check on

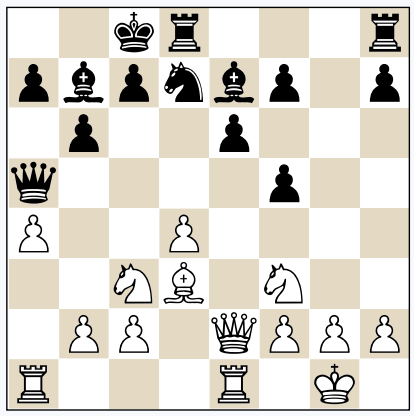
'One of the most striking aspects of Karpov's play is his unique feel for the global harmony of the position.'

g5 and my next move seems mainly aimed at solving this issue.
15.h4! ♗d7? My opponent noticed only the secondary threat of 16.♗xb5, failing to feel how tight the rope around her queen was becoming.
Inserting 15...♕f4+ was essential.
16.♘h5! Even though the black queen's 'optical' mobility is more reduced than in the first example, it still is remarkable that it is trapped almost in the centre of the board.

The next two examples are closely related to Karpov-Portisch, as the advanced position of Black's queen offered me a clear target.

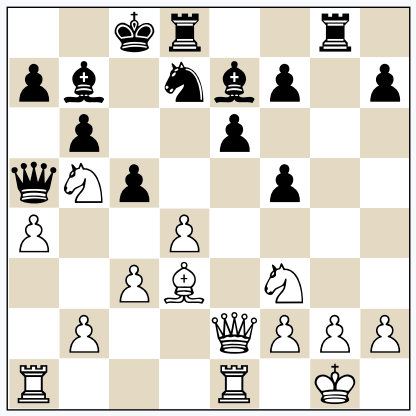
In the first of them I had planned the winning manoeuvre during home analysis, which seems to suggest that, just like Karpov, I was constantly looking for possible queen traps.

Judit Polgar
Sergey Volkov
Batumi 1999



position after 13...♕a5

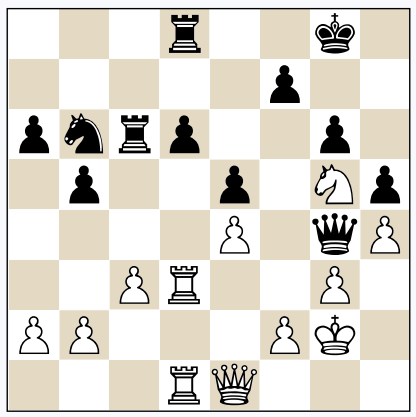
14.♘b5! My opponent must have thought this was not dangerous, since he has active play along the g-file and can undermine the centre with ...c7-c5. But over the next few moves all the puzzle pieces will fall into place. My global plan is c2-c3, followed by ♘f3-d2-c4.
14...♖hg8 15.c3 c5



16.g3! A simple way of freeing the knight for the transfer to the queenside.
16...a6 The centre's undermining 16...cxd4 fails to save the queen, when 17.♘fxd4, threatening ♘b3 or b4, and 17.b4 are equally good.
17.♘d2 axb5
17...♗d5 secures the queen only temporarily due to 18.♗c4 threatening ♘b3.
18.axb5 Another piece has joined the collective queen hunt – the a1-rook. Black resigned a few moves later.

The aforementioned global positional harmony does require deep intuitive understanding. Sometimes the eye is pleased when looking at a position, but misses an imperceptible but essential detail.

Judit Polgar
Mustafa Enes Yilmaz
Yerevan 2014



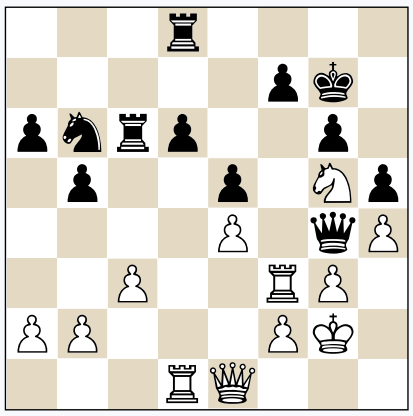
position after 27.♕e1

White's chances are slightly better in view of Black's permanent weaknesses along the d-file, but this is a normal sit-

uation in such openings as the Najdorf and the Sveshnikov. Black's rooks are well placed, the knight controls d5 and exerts some light queenside pressure, while the queen keeps White busy on the opposite wing. And yet this description is only partly accurate.

27...♔g7? This is the kind of move Karpov used to play automatically in order to increase his positional harmony when there was nothing concrete to do. But as we'll see, the immediate queen retreat was essential here.

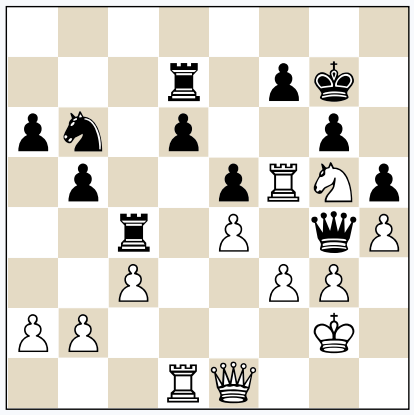
28.♖f3!



Seemingly an inoffensive move, since Black has more than one way to defend f7. But attacking the pawn only serves to gain time for the decisive threat of ♖f5, followed by f2-f3, proving that the black queen is, just as in the previous examples, exposed and not active.

28...f6?!

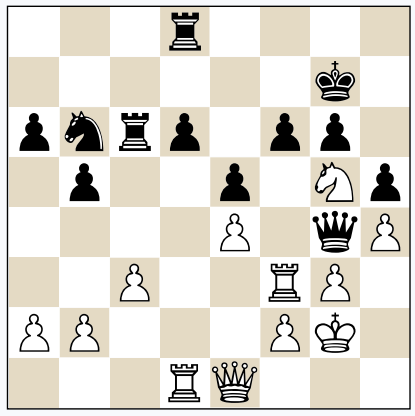
Black already had no satisfactory defence, but if he had spotted my threat, he could have set a trap: 28...♖d7 29.♖f5?! ♖c4 30.f3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

30...♖xe4!!, unexpectedly saving the queen.

Instead of the hurried 29.♖f5, the quiet move 29.b3!! would prevent 29...♖c4, leaving Black helpless against the threat ♖f3-f5, followed by f2-f3, since the white queen on d7 blocks the black queen's retreat.



29.♖f5! fxg5 There is nothing better already, since 29...♖c4 will run into 30.♘e6+.

30.f3 ♕xf5 31.exf5 gxf5 32.♕e3 And I won before long. ■

A GRANDMASTER AMONG UNIVERSITIES.

If you're interested in playing chess at an American university, we want to hear from you. The University of Texas at Dallas offers highly competitive scholarships to master-level players. For more information, please contact Program Director Jim Stallings at james.stallings@utdallas.edu at least one year in advance of your intended fall enrollment date.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
CHESS TEAM

chess.utdallas.edu

UT DALLAS

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT

PREMIUM

CHESSBASE ACCOUNT:

Access the world of ChessBase from wherever you are 24/7!

PLAYCHESS
The ultimate chess experience

LIVE DATABASE
Professional research: 8 million games online

MY GAMES CLOUD
Your one-stop cloud storage area

FRITZ ONLINE
Your browser-based chess engine

VIDEOS
Private masterclasses

OPENINGS
Welcome to modern opening preparation

TRAINING
Calculate, sacrifice, mate

ENGINE CLOUD
Top engine on the best hardware

LET'S CHECK
Knowledge is mate: 200 million analyses

CB NEWS
The world-renowned chess news portal

NEW FRITZ-TRAINER DVDs

Make the Stonewall your new surprise weapon against 1.d4! Let Victor Bologan initiate you to the secrets of the Modern Pirc Defence. Or learn to master one of the most impressing techniques in chess: the positional exchange sacrifice!

ERWIN L'AMI: THE DUTCH STONEWALL - A FIGHTING REPERTOIRE AGAINST 1.d4

In the Dutch Stonewall variation, Black fights for the initiative from the very first move. World Champions such as Mikhail Botvinnik, and most recently Magnus Carlsen, have shown just how dangerous it can be. Take a fascinating journey with Grandmaster Erwin l'Ami and let him demonstrate the depth and charm of this attractive opening. At the end of this five-hour training course, your reward will be a new combative repertoire against 1.d4!

29,90 €

VICTOR BOLOGAN: THE MODERN PIRC

Victor Bologan has played the Pirc all his life - and has more than a few words to say on what is clearly one of his favourite openings. "The Modern Pirc is actually a mixture of the Caro-Kann and the Pirc. In many lines, Black combines the ideas of the Classical Pirc, where the fianchettoed bishop is important, with the Caro-Kann idea of fighting for the center with c6-d5. The Modern Pirc is a very flexible opening with a rich variety of options." Equip yourself with a combative opening repertoire against 1.e4!

29,90 €

ALEXEI SHIROV: HOW TO CRACK THE BERLIN WALL WITH 5.Re1

The Berlin Defence (1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 Nf6 4.O-O Nxe4) is a pain for many 1.e4 players. Black's position is extremely solid and almost impregnable, which is why the system was coined the "Berlin Wall". On this, his latest DVD, Alexei Shirov recommends a setup with 5.Re1. This may lead to a symmetrical position, but one that is full of potential and contains a great deal of finesse. "Mr. Shirov - tear down this wall!"

29,90 €

ADRIAN MIKHALCHISHIN: PATTERN RECOGNITION AND TYPICAL PLANS

It's scientifically proven that the more patterns a chess player knows and learns, the better he or she plays. Let GM Adrian Mikhalchishin explain typical patterns and strategic concepts through the games of the World Champions and broaden your chess horizon. Learn the art of pattern recognition and analog thinking, techniques that have also helped the author himself to many a victory! Video running time: 6 hours 9 mins (English) with interactive tests and video feedback.

29,90 €

SERGEI TIVIAKOV: THE ART OF THE POSITIONAL EXCHANGE SACRIFICE

Positional exchange sacrifices are something most club players associate with dynamic play, but in practice, many are afraid to voluntarily enter a position with a material disadvantage. However, such sacrifices can be the stuff of brilliancies. Let Sergei Tiviakov explain the secrets of this sacrificial art to you using the games of Petrosian, Botvinnik, Kasparov, to name but a few, and get your own game up to the next level! Video running time: 4 hours 21 mins

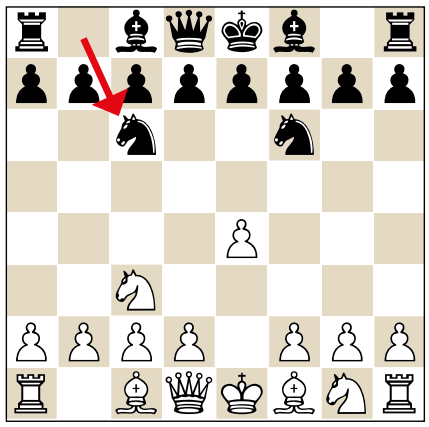
29,90 €

ChessBase GmbH · News: en.chessbase.com · CB Shop: shop.chessbase.com
CHESSBASE DEALER: NEW IN CHESS · P.O. Box 1093 · NL-1810 KB Alkmaar
phone (+31)72 5127137 · fax (+31)72 5158234 · WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

ChessBase

Let those knights tango!

Jeroen Bosch



2...♘c6!?

'Objectively, 2...e5 is the correct approach, but is that why we embarked on the Alekhine? I would like to make a case for 2...♘c6!?, which is the fun reply.'

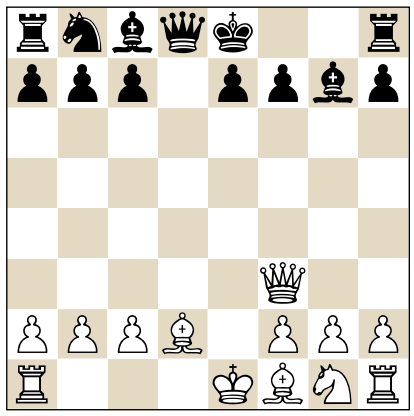
When you are playing the Alekhine against 1.e4, you are looking forward to an adventurous game. There are quite a few spoil-sports, though, who will not be provoked into 2.e5 and go for the sober 2.♘c3. Now the standard Alekhine reply used to be 2...d5, but repertoire books in this century no longer advocate this course, and for good reasons! Instead, they now almost universally recommend 2...e5, transposing to the Open Games (the Vienna or the Four Knights).

Objectively, this is the correct approach, but is that why we embarked on the Alekhine? I would like to make a case for 2...♘c6!?, which is the fun reply. Personally I am reminded of the so-called Black Knights' Tango (1.d4 ♘c6 2.c4 ♘f6). Let me introduce our subject by means of an old game of mine in which I fell (hook, line and sinker) for Black's main trap in this line!

1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3

A modest move. White in no way tries to refute the Alekhine (2.e5!), but simply settles for development. It is my firm conviction that 2.e5 ♘d5 3.d4 d6 4.♘f3 is the way towards an opening edge for White versus the Alekhine. Nevertheless, the objectively strongest approach may not always be the most unpleasant one!

The older Alekhine books always focused on 2...d5 now – the move that imparts a distinct Alekhine flavour. There are a few problems, however. After 3.e5 people used to feel that 3...d4 (the provocative 3...♘e4 is strongly met by 4.♘ce2!; the more solid 3...♘fd7 may transfer to the Classical French, but there is also the violent 4.e6!? to reckon with) led to a (nearly) equal endgame after 4.exf6 dxc3 5.fxg7 cxd2+ 6.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 7.♗xd2 ♗xg7. However, as Jonny Hector has shown, White has a dangerous alternative in the form of 6.♗xd2 ♗xg7 7.♕f3!?.



If this looks familiar, you might be a loyal reader of this magazine. I advocated this SOS-line for White in New In Chess 2009/8!

It is because of all these issues connected to 2...d5 that Alekhine-authors started recommending 2...e5. They are right to point out that White now has to play either the Vienna or the Four Knights, neither of which are particularly dangerous answers to 1...e5. However, it's unappealing

NEW IN CHESS TRAINING

to go for these lines, which must be standard fare for your opponent!

2...♘c6!? Frivolous and good fun! The same position arises via 1...♘c6 2.♘c3 ♘f6, of course.

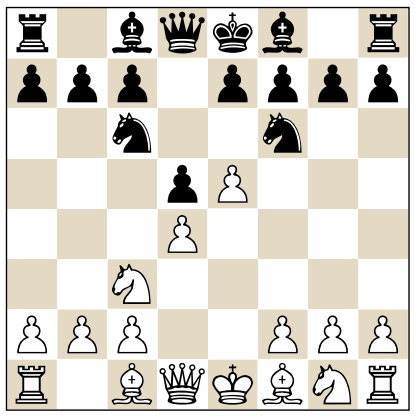
3.d4 This is obviously the critical reply. We will look at the alternatives later.

3...d5 The point of Black's set-up.

No good is 3...e5, for 4.dxe5 ♘xe5 5.f4 ♘c6 6.e5 ♘g8 clearly favours White – Euwe-Breyer, Vienna 1921 (but 0-1 in 30 moves).

Also bad is 3...e6 4.d5! exd5 5.exd5 ♘e5 6.♕e2 ♕e7 7.d6! cxd6 8.♗g5 ♕e6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.f4, with an obvious edge for White in S.Polgar-Westerinen, London 1988.

4.e5



This looks very strong, for where is Black's knight dancing to now?

Nothing special is 4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♘f3 ♗g4 (5...♗f5) 6.♗e2 (6.♗b5) 6...e6 7.0-0 ♗e7.

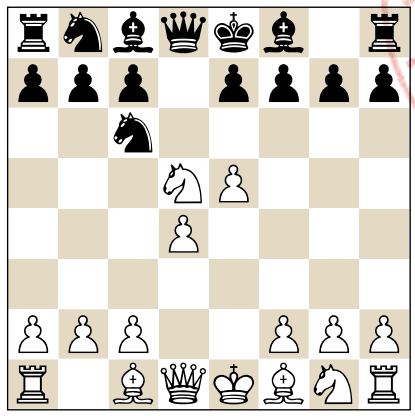
The tricky 4.♗b5 is no good because of 4...♘xe4 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.d5?! a6 7.♗a4 b5 8.dxc6 (8.♗b3 ♘a5) 8...♕xd1+ 9.♔xd1 bxa4, with a large edge in Paasi-Jouhki, Joensuu 2001.

4...♘d7 Hey, what's this? Isn't pawn d5 up for grabs?

4...♘g8 is also played, but such backward chess surely poses no theoretical problems for White. 4...♘e4 is also dubious after 5.♘xe4 dxe4 6.c3.

5.♘xd5?! Greedy and not very promising. We will look at the alternatives below.

5...♘db8! Excellent! Here I realized that my lower-rated opponent had cunningly tempted me to take the forbidden fruit.



6.♘e3

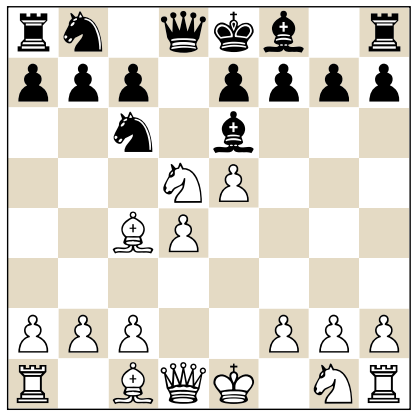
The alternatives are no better:

■ Dubious is 6.c4?! e6 7.♘c3 ♕xd4.

■ 6.♘c3 ♕xd4 7.♕xd4 ♘xd4 8.♗d3 ♗f5 (8...♘bc6 9.♘d5!) 9.♗xf5 ♘xf5 10.♗f4 e6 produced an equal game in Akhmetov-Alekseenko, Moscow 2011.

■ The pawn sacrifice 6.♘c3 ♕xd4 7.♗e3!? ♕xe5 8.♘f3 ♕d6 9.♗c4 (9.♕xd6 exd6 10.♘d5 ♔d8) should be met by 9...e6 10.♘b5 (10.♕e2!?) 10...♕e7 11.♕e2 a6 12.♗c5 ♕d8! (12...♕xc5 13.♘xc7+ ♔d8 14.♘xa8 favoured White, Sergeev-Vlassov, Novokuznetsk 2012) 13.♖d1 ♗d7 14.♗xf8 axb5 15.♗xg7 ♖g8, and Black wins.

■ 6.♗c4 is met by 6...♗e6! (not 6...e6 7.♗g5!), and now:



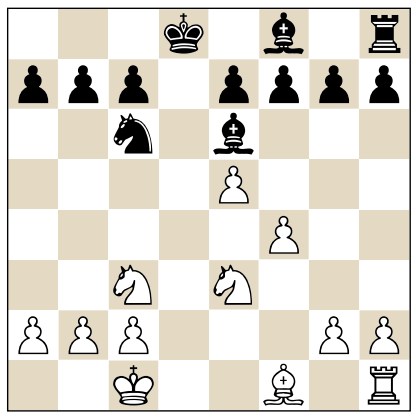
– 7.♘e3 ♗xc4 8.♘xc4 ♕d5! (but not 8...♕xd4 9.♕e2! e6 10.♘f3 ♕g4 Langner-Salmensuu, Rethymnon 2003, and now simply 11.0-0±) 9.♘e3 ♕xd4 10.♕xd4 ♘xd4, and Black had no problems in Röder-Panchenko, Bad Wörishofen 1995.

– The piece sacrifice is interesting: 7.♘xc7+ ♕xc7 8.♗xe6 fxe6 9.♘h3 (9.♕g4? ♘b4–+, Lagrain-R.Janssen, Lommel 2002) 9...♕d7 10.c3 ♘a6 11.0-0 g6 12.f4? (White has decent compensation after 12.♕g4) 12...♗g7 13.♗e3 ♘c7, with an edge in Hresc-Danner, Latschach 2011.

6...♕xd4 7.♕xd4 ♘xd4 8.♗d2

Practice has also seen 8.c3 ♘e6! (8...♘dc6 9.♘d5!) 9.g3 ♗d7 10.♗g2 ♗c6 11.f4 ♗xg2 12.♘xg2 ♘c5, with approximately equal chances.

8...♘bc6 9.♗c3 ♗e6 10.0-0-0 0-0-0 11.♘e2 ♘b5! 12.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 13.f4 ♘xc3 14.♘xc3



14...g5! 15.fxg5

Not 15.g3? gxf4 16.gxf4 ♗h6 and wins.

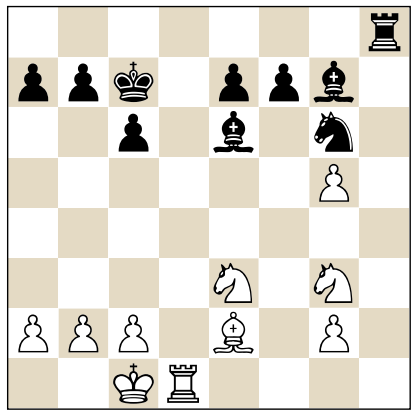
15...♘xe5 16.♗e2

16.♘e4 h6, and Black won in the earlier game Landenbergue-Minasian, New York 1993.

16...c6

Or the immediate 16...h6.

17.♘e4 h6 18.h4 hxg5 19.♖d1+ ♔c7 20.hxg5 ♗g7 21.♘g3 ♘g6



And the fact that I managed to win in the end had nothing to do with the obvious endgame plus that Black enjoys here; Bosch-Porrasmaa, Schaan 1998.

So, now that we know why 2...♘c6 is relevant, and why 3...d5 is playable (because of the trick 5...♘db8!), we can delve a little deeper.

Alternatives to 3.d4

Before we look at 3.d4 d5 4.e5 ♘d7 in more detail, let's look at the alternatives to 3.d4.

■ If White insists on the Four Knights with **3.♘f3** then we can still go for **3...d5** 3...e5. **4.e5** Or 4.exd5 ♘xd5 5.♗b5 ♘xc3 6.bxc3 ♗d7 7.♗a3 a6 8.♗c4 g6 9.♕e2 ♗g7 10.0-0 0-0 11.d4 ♖e8 12.♖fe1 (12.♖ad1) 12...e5!, Koukoufikis-Kotronias, Chania 2000.

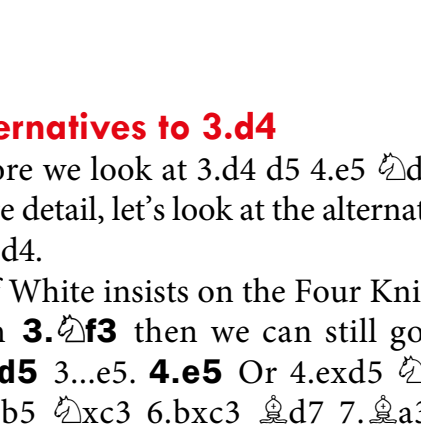
4...♘e4 In this line it favours Black that knights have been developed to f3 and c6. Compare this to 2.♘c3 d5 3.e5 ♘e4, when 4.♘ce2 is strong.

4...d4 5.exf6 dxc3 6.fxg7 cxd2+, and with the knights already on f3 and c6 White has nothing better than the endgame after 7.♕xd2 ♕xd2+ 8.♗xd2 ♗xg7 9.0-0-0.

5.♘e2 The game is equal after 5.♗b5 ♗d7!? (5...♗g4 6.h3) 6.♘xd5 ♘xe5 7.♗xd7+ ♕xd7.

5.h3 e6 6.d3 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 d4 (7...♘a5!?, planning ...c5) 8.c4 b6 9.♗e2 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♗e7 11.♗f4 ♕d7 12.♘d2 0-0-0 13.♖e1 ♔b8 14.♗f3 f5 15.exf6 gxf6 16.♕e2 e5∓; Riff-Bauer, Switzerland 2011.

5...♗g4 Here's the difference!

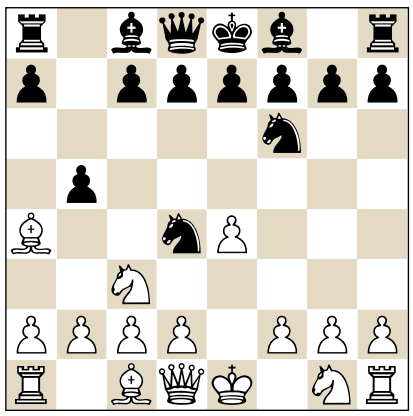


6.d4 6.d3? ♗xf3 7.gxf3 ♘xe5! threatens mate! **6...e6 7.c3 f6 8.h3 ♗xf3 9.gxf3 ♘g5 10.♗xg5 fxg5** and Black is doing well, J.Martin-Schuh, Pardubice 2015.

■ Bad is **3.♗c4 e6!** 3...♘xe4 is an immediate equalizer, the text is more ambitious. **4.d3** Here 4.♕e2 is met by 4...♘d4 5.♕d3 c5 6.♘f3 d5 7.exd5 exd5 8.♘xd4 (8.♗b5+ ♘xb5 9.♕xb5+, S.van Eijk-Jerez Perez, Vlissingen 2008, and now Black should have gone for the powerful 9...♗d7! 10.♕xb7 ♖b8 11.♕xa7 d4) 8...dxc4 9.♕e3+ ♗e7 10.♘f3 0-0, with a superior game for Black in Jazbinsek-Mohr, Nova Gorica 1994. **4...d5** Or 4...♗b4 5.♗d2 d5, Cruz-Kogan, Lisbon 2000. **5.♗b3 ♗b4 6.exd5 exd5 7.d4 0-0 8.♘ge2 ♘e7 9.0-0 c6** and Black has a favourable Exchange French-like position; Maes-Minasian, Elista 1998.

■ **3.f4 d5 4.e5 d4** 4...♘e4; 4...♗g4. **5.exf6 dxc3 6.fxg7 cxd2+ 7.♕xd2** Not 7.♗xd2 ♗xg7 8.♘f3 ♗f5 9.♗c4 ♘d4 10.♘xd4 ♕xd4 11.♕e2 ♕xb2−+ Moll-Mestrovic, Gent 1999. **7...♕xd2+** Or 7...♗xg7 8.♕xd8+ ♘xd8. **8.♗xd2 ♗xg7 9.0-0-0 ♗g4 10.♗e2 h5 11.♘f3 0-0-0 12.♖he1 ♘d4** With an easy game for Black, Mirumian-Zajarnyi, Pardubice 1998.

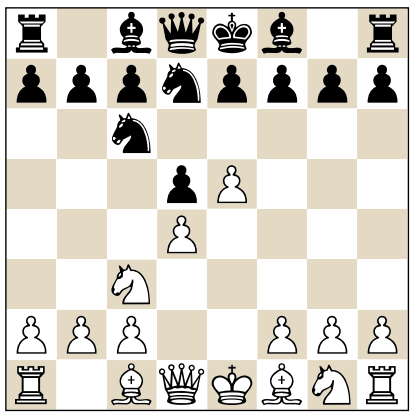
■ The attempt to reach the Spanish Four Knights with **3.♗b5!?** falters after **3...♘d4 4.♗a4 b5**



5.♘xb5 ♘xb5 6.♗xb5 ♘xe4 7.♕e2 ♗b7 8.♘f3 a6 9.♗a4 ♘c5 as was seen in Hennings-G.Gross, Dudweiler 1996.

3.d4

3.d4 d5 4.e5 ♘d7



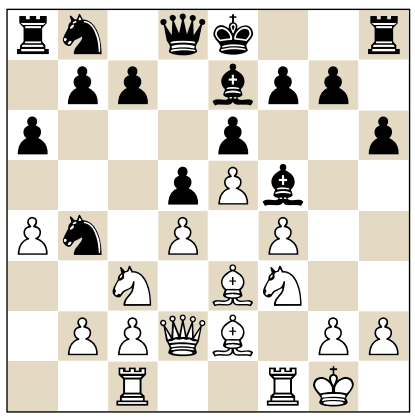
We already know that Black obtains a decent game when White takes the d-pawn, but this is hardly forced, of course. White's most sensible scheme of development now is ♘f3, ♗e2/d3, ♗e3, 0-0 and take it from there, but practice has seen a few other attempts, too. Black will try to complete his development in the following manner: ...♘b6, ...♗f5/g4, ...e6, ...♗e7, and usually ...0-0, perhaps followed by ...f6, but ...♕d7 and ...0-0-0 can also be an attractive option. Note that Black will often try to throw in ...♘b4 (attacking a bishop on d3 or the pawn on c2), followed by ...c5. Black's position may look like an odd French Defence (the c6-knight blocks the advance of the c-pawn for the moment), but the important thing is that he can still develop his light-squared bishop outside the pawn chain to f5 or g4.

5.♘f3

Sensible, but not very dangerous for Black. Let's look at some alternatives:

■ 5.♘ge2 e6!? (5...♘b6 6.♘f4! g5?! 7.♘h5 favours White, Atabayev-Vlassov, Moscow 2015) 6.♘f4 ♘e7 7.♗e3 a6 8.♕d2?! c5! 9.dxc5 ♘f5 was a lovely French Defence for Black in Van de Oudeweetering-Hoogendoorn, Leeuwarden 2001.

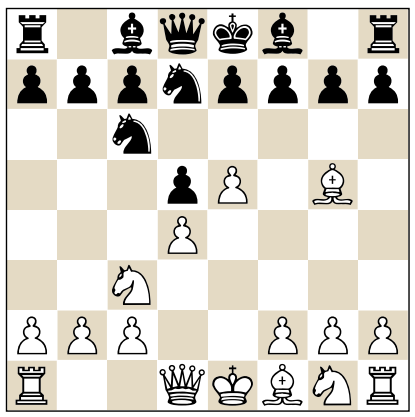
■ French GM Christian Bauer (who always reaches our SOS position via 1...♘c6) played an excellent game against the non-critical 5.a4. For reasons of space I will just give the moves: 5...♘b4!? 6.f4 ♘b8! 7.♗e3 ♗f5! 8.♖c1 e6 9.♘f3 ♗e7 10.♗e2 a6 11.0-0 h6 12.♕d2



12...♘8c6! 13.♗d1 ♘a5! 14.b3 h5 15.♘e2 h4 16.c3 ♘d3 17.♖a1 c5! 18.dxc5 ♘xc5 19.♘ed4 ♗d3 20.♖e1 ♗g6 21.♕a2 ♘e4 22.♖c1 ♖c8 23.♕b2 0-0, and Black's chances are to be

preferred; Zeller-Bauer, Switzerland 2013.

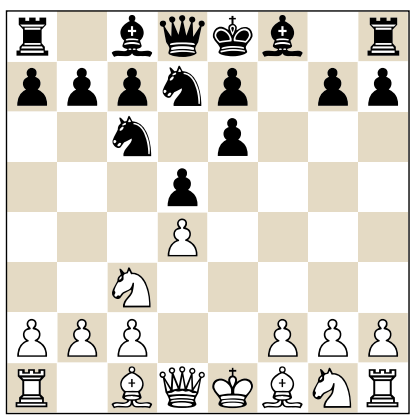
■ White aims to hinder Black's development with 5.♗g5!?



– 5...♘b6 6.f4 (6.♗e2 f6! 7.exf6 exf6 8.♗f4 ♗b4 is a very comfortable French Exchange, Isserman-Pötsch, Frankfurt 2011) 6...h5 7.♗e2 ♗f5 8.♘f3 (not 8.♗xh5?! ♘c4!) 8...♕d7 9.h3 0-0-0 10.0-0 was Fernandes-Rogers, Strasbourg 1994, and now 10...f6, with a complicated game.

– 5...f6 deserves serious consideration. Black was doing well in the game Euler-Stroppa, Gross Gerau 2000, after 6.♗d3 g6 7.exf6 exf6 8.♕e2+ ♔f7 9.♕f3 ♔g7 10.♗e3 ♘b4 11.♘xd5 ♘xd3+ 12.cxd3 c6 13.♘f4 ♗b4+ 14.♔f1 ♘b6.

■ Black can cope with the violent 5.e6!? after 5...fxe6

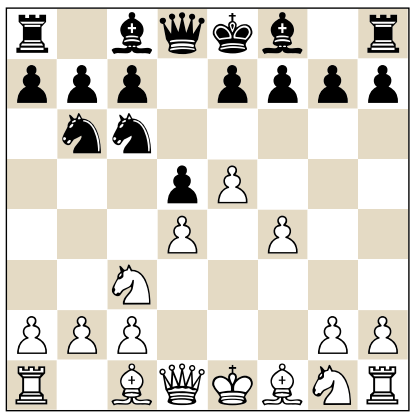


– 6.f4 g6 7.♘f3 ♗g7 8.h4 ♘f6 9.♘e5, T.L. Petrosian-M.Foisor, Golden Sands 2012. 9...0-0!;

– 6.♘f3 g6 7.h4 ♗g7 8.h5 e5! 9.♘g5 ♘xd4 10.hxg6 hxg6 11.♖xh8+ ♗xh8 12.♘xd5 and now 12...♘c5! is even better than 12...♘f8, as in Keskinen-Porrasmaa, Helsinki 2002.

– 6.♗d3 g6 7.h4 ♗g7 (also strong is 7...e5!) 8.h5 ♘xd4 9.hxg6 h6 10.♘h3 e5! 11.♘xd5 ♘c5 12.♘e3 ♘xd3+ 13.♕xd3 ♕d6 favoured Black in Lu-T.L. Petrosian, Golden Sands 2012.

■ 5.f4 ♘b6

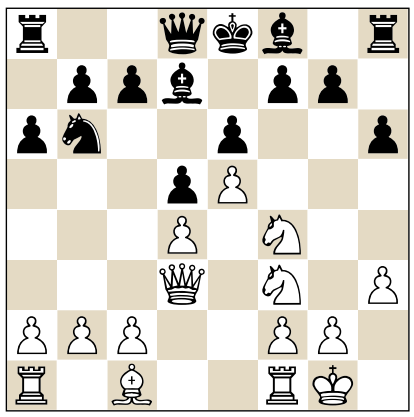


– 6.♔f2!? h6 7.♘f3 ♗f5 8.♗d3 ♗xd3 9.♕xd3 e6 10.a3 ♕d7 11.b3 0-0-0 will become sharp but looks OK for Black, Xu-Bauer, Vandoeuvre-les-Nancy 2015.

– 6.♗e3 h5!? (6...♗f5 7.g4) 7.♘f3 ♗f5 8.♘h4 ♗g4 9.♕d2 e6 10.h3 ♗e2!? 11.♗xe2 ♕xh4+ 12.♗f2 ♕e7 was twice played by IM Vlassov. White is slightly better.

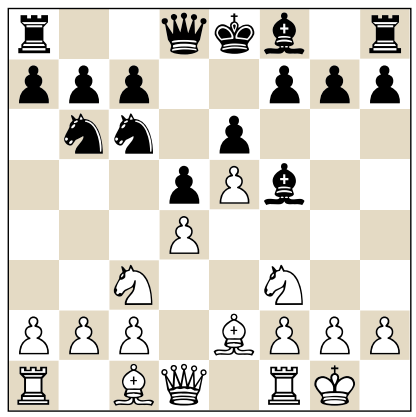
– 6.♘f3 ♗g4 (6...♗f5) 7.♗e2 e6 8.0-0 ♗e7 9.h3 ♗xf3 (9...♗f5!) 10.♗xf3 0-0 11.b3, and although Black won, White is better here with his bishop pair; Suhail-Fier, Dubai 2014.

5...♘b6 6.♗e2 White can prevent the bishop coming to g4 with 6.h3!?, when 6...h6!? is an equally interesting waiting move (6...♗f5 is met by 7.♘h4 ♗d7 8.♗e2 e6 9.♘f3±, Feher-G.Gross, Balatonbereny 1996): 7.♗d3 (7.♗e2 ♗f5) 7...♘b4! 8.0-0 (8.♗e2?! ♗f5) 8...♘xd3 9.♕xd3 e6 (Black settles for a French Defence in which he has traded off White's light-squared bishop) 10.♘e2 ♗d7 11.♘f4 a6!



12.♖e1 ♗b5 13.♕d1 a5! 14.c3 a4, and the 'bad' French bishop is doing great! Bonet-Panchenko, Berga 1996.

6...♗f5 7.0-0 e6



8.b3 Black is more or less fine, regardless of White's choice here.

– 8.♗g5 ♗e7 9.♗xe7 ♕xe7 10.♕d2 0-0 11.♘d1 Neukirch-Sell, Germany 1995, and now 11...f6 would have been consistent.

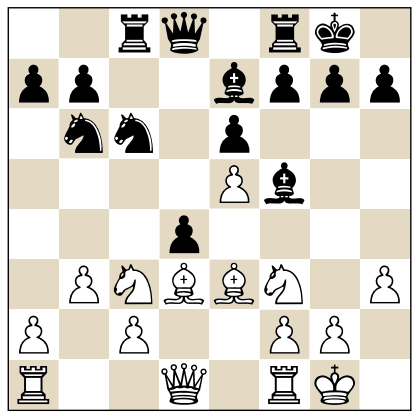
– 8.♗f4 ♗e7 9.h3 0-0 10.g4?! J.Willemze-Kovarcik, Pinneberg 1997, was good for Black with 10...♗e4!, an even better reply than the game continuation 10...♗g6.

– 8.♗e3 ♗e7, and it is not so clear what White's plan is, while Black can go ...0-0 and ...f6.

8...♘b4?! Correct is 8...♗e7.

9.♘e1?! 9.a3!.

9...c5 10.♗e3?! 10.♘b5±. **10...cxd4 11.♗xd4 ♘c6 12.♘f3 ♗e7 13.h3 0-0 14.♗e3 ♖c8 15.♗d3? d4**



was more or less winning in Milov-Bauer, Ajaccio blitz 2007.

So, the next time your opponent goes 2.♘c3 against the Alekhine let your knights dance with 2...♘c6 ! ■

SHENZHEN

While all eyes in the West are on super-talent Wei Yi, many tend to forget that, for the moment, 24-year-old Ding Liren remains China's number one player. Says **ERWIN L'AMI,** who saw the three-time Chinese champion win a new grandmaster tournament in Shenzhen.

Shenzhen enters the chess scene

Ding Liren wins inaugural Longgang Masters

And if Baidu Translate doesn't work, there's still good old sign language! On the free day the Longgang Masters got a taste of Chinese culture.

Out already started upon my arrival at the airport of Shenzhen. The person picking me up (holding up a big sign saying 'Hello there Erwin!') did not speak a whole lot of English, but that was not a problem! He took out his phone and turned it into a hotspot so that I could access the Internet with my phone as well. He then proceeded to add me as a contact on WeChat, the Chinese equivalent of WhatsApp, before writing me perfect English messages translated with Baidu Translate, which is the Chinese equivalent of Google Translate. Upon which I would use that same translation app to answer in fluent Chinese! For readers who enjoyed the film 'Lost in Translation', the scenes of Bill Murray in total and utter confusion are definitely a thing of the past!

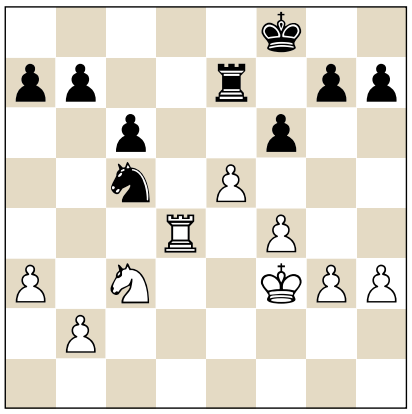
After 'talking' a bit we went to a restaurant, where the bill was paid by scanning a QR-code using the WeChat app, and subsequently the car that brought me to the hotel was, you guessed it, ordered with the Chinese alternative to Uber. Chinese sure love their technology!

The reason for my trip to China was the 1st Longgang Masters tournament, where two Chinese top players, Ding Liren and Yu Yangyi, contested a double round-robin with four foreign players: Anish Giri, Mickey Adams, Pentala Harikrishna and Peter Svidler. I was there as Anish's second.

Shenzhen connects China's mainland to Hong Kong and the Longgang district is a green urban area with ample opportunities for a nice stroll rather different from the earlier experiences I had in both Nanjing and Beijing! Close to the hotel was a spacious park and in general the atmosphere was very tranquil and peaceful. Perhaps that somewhat reflected the action in the playing hall, since half of the rounds saw all games ending peacefully. However, the 30-move-rule did assure that most of these games were seriously contested.

Have a look at a sample from the third round, Anish Giri playing Ding Liren, which turned out to be important for the final standings.

Anish Giri
Ding Liren
Shenzhen 2017 (3)



position after 29...f6

Continuous pressure had forced Ding to flee into a worse endgame. With his last move (29...f7-f6), he attempts to free himself somewhat.

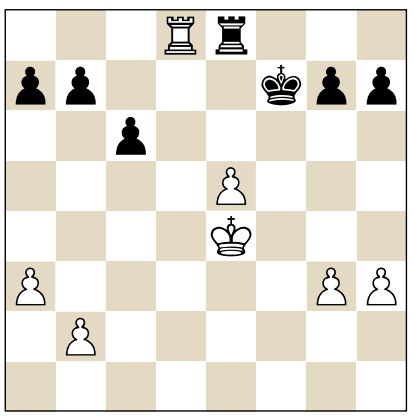
30.♖d8+?!

Tempting, but the way forward was 30.exf6! gxf6 31.♖d6!. A nice sample line runs 31...♔f7?! (31...f5 is a better try) 32.b4 ♘e6 33.♘e4!, showing how quickly things can escalate. Black is doomed, since 33...f5 34.♘g5+ ♘xg5+ 35.fxg5 is a hopeless rook ending. Anish thought 31...♖e6 was a reason not to go for 30.exf6, but here 32.♖d8+! ♖e8 (32...♔f7 33.b4!) 33.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 34.♘e4! leads to a winning pawn endgame that I would invite you to verify for yourself. All very instructive, and obviously far from trivial!

30...♔f7 31.♘e4 ♘xe4 32.♔xe4

This feels like progress for White. Both rook and king are vastly superior to their counterparts.

32...fxe5 33.fxe5 ♖e8!



And suddenly... it's all gone! Black's point is that after 34.♖xe8 ♔xe8 35.e6 ♔e7 36.♔e5 a5!? it is surprisingly Black who has absolutely nothing to fear.

34.♖d7+ ♖e7 35.♖d8

35.♖d4 ♖e8 36.♖a4 ♖a8 followed by ...♔e6 would also not lead anywhere.

35...♖e8 36.♖d7+ ♖e7 37.♖d8

Draw agreed.

In the next round, Giri did grab his chance when Harikrishna went astray in an anti-Sicilian sideline.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

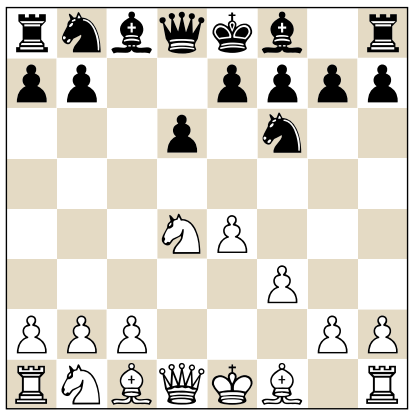
Pentala Harikrishna
Anish Giri
Shenzhen 2017 (3)
Sicilian, Prins Variation

I wish I had had a wide choice from my many wins in Shenzhen, but having looked through all of my games from beginning till end, it turned out I had only one to choose from.

1.e4 c5

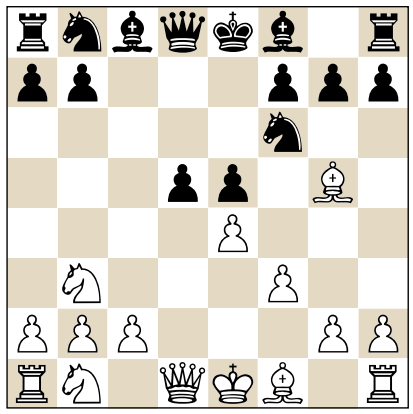
I played the Open Spanish in the first round against Michael Adams and experienced no problems in the opening, but by Round 3, having recovered from my jetlag, I decided to be more adventurous.

2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.f3



This sub-line has become quite popular lately. In fact, it was used by Magnus Carlsen in a must-not-lose game against Sergey Karjakin in the World Championship match tiebreak. With that in mind, the surprise value of this move is no longer very high.

5...e5 6.♘b3 d5 7.♗g5

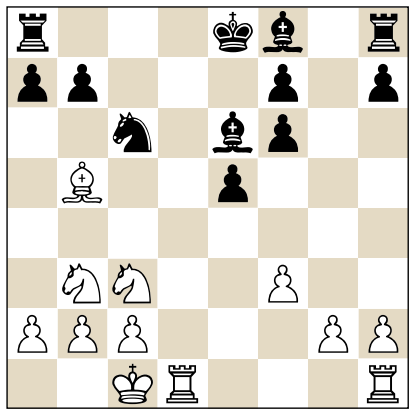


7...♗e6 The old way of doing things. The ensuing endgame looks very double-edged. Black gets the bishop pair in return for some doubled pawns. A little bit of a Berlin Endgame vibe, but even more dynamic.

7...d4!? leads to complications, but as a Najdorf player I am all about simplicity and boredom.

8.♗xf6 gxf6 9.exd5 ♕xd5 10.♕xd5 ♗xd5 11.♘c3 ♗e6 12.0-0-0 ♘c6 13.♗b5

So far the moves have been very natural, and we reached this position pretty quickly.

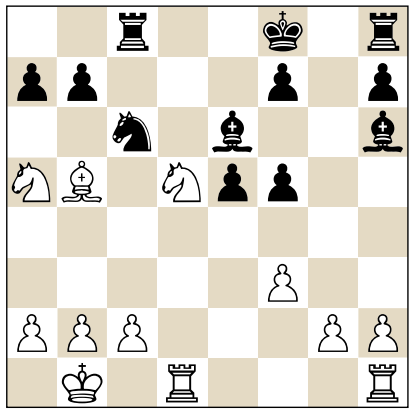


13...♖c8 A very strong, prepared move, forcing my opponent into his first long think.

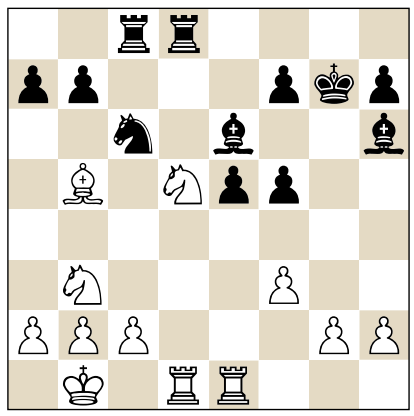
13...a6 is too direct to my taste. After 14.♗xc6+ bxc6 15.♘e4, Black will have to sweat to keep his bishop pair. The knights start jumping and Black is yet to develop and consolidate his pieces.

14.♘d5 Very natural. **14...f5** This allows the ♘f6+/♘d5+ operation, but unfortunately I didn't see a better move.
14...♗h6+ 15.♔b1 f5 is met by 16.♘c5!.
15.♘a5
I was very surprised to see this. Besides the natural ♘f6/♘d5 checks, it was possible to go for the natural 15.♖he1 or something more cunning, in the style of 15.♗a4!?.
After 15.♘f6+ ♔e7 16.♘d5+ ♗xd5 (of course it is also possible to go back with the king) Black has lost his right to castle, but the actual effect it has on the position is minimal: 17.♖xd5 ♔e6! 18.♖dd1, and Black is doing OK. But having lost the bishop along the way, I wouldn't have been overly ambitious here.
15...♗h6+!
A strong sequence, which Hari had missed.
16.♔b1 ♔f8!

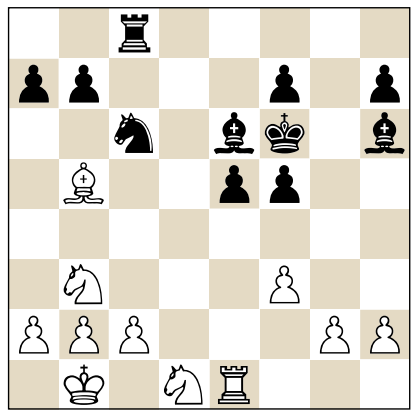
It looks like the chess players are not sure what is going on either, but Michael Adams, Pentala Harikrishna, Peter Svidler and Anish Giri are certainly having fun.



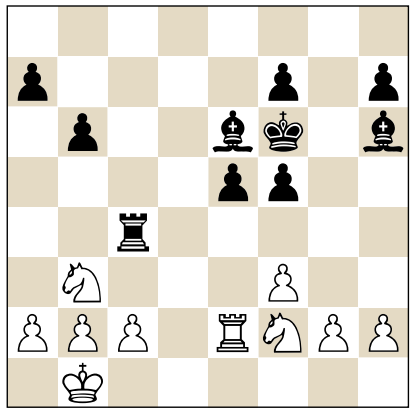
17.♘b3?
The knight returns, having lost two tempi. Sad. I guess White must have thought it was still possible to keep the game under control, but in fact two tempi is more than he can afford. From here on in, it is Black who is on a roll.
This was the moment to stay principled: 17.♗xc6! bxc6 18.♘b4 c5 19.♘bc6 e4 20.♘d8!, and by picking up the bishop White is able to maintain the balance.
17...♔g7 18.♖he1
Already at this point, 18.♘c3, another retreat, is possibly the best move: 18...a6 19.♗xc6 ♖xc6, and this is probably a better version for White than in the game, having the d-file still under control. Having said that, most of the people I know would kill for such a position.
18...♖hd8



This and my previous move are very strong, but I am afraid they are a little bit too natural to reward with an exclam.
19.♘c3
19.c4 is anti-positional, but I must confess that the computer's 19...♔f8!! wasn't the first move that came to my mind.
19...♖xd1+!
A strong move. Black is ready to give up the d-file in order to transfer the bishop to the a7-g1 diagonal.
20.♘xd1
After 20.♖xd1 a6! 21.♗f1 ♗e3! White's knights are totally harmless, and there is no counterplay in sight.
20...♔f6!
A sweet move. Black is totally in charge here; there is neither counterplay nor harmony in White's camp. Still, his pawn structure is very solid, so it takes time to break the position down and some Karjakin-Carlsen scenario is likely.



21.♗xc6
I was shocked to see this move, but it wasn't easy for White to defend against the potential threats and penetrations. Now he is just trying to erect some fortress and confuse me with the knights.
21...♖xc6 22.♘f2 ♖c4
22...♗f8 was my first instinct, but I didn't even want to allow 23.g4.
23.♖e2 b6

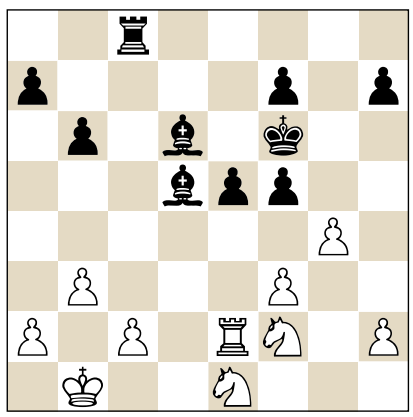


An exaggeration, but I decided to give White the move to see what his defensive set-up would look like.

24.♘c1 ♗f8 25.♘cd3 ♗d6 26.b3 ♖c8 27.g4

White finally gets this push, but now the f3-pawn is in some immediate danger. However, if White doesn't try this, he would risk not making a single active move once ...h5-h4 comes into play.

27...♗d5 28.♘e1



28...♗b4?!

Maintaining a large part of the advantage, but missing a deep strategic opportunity.

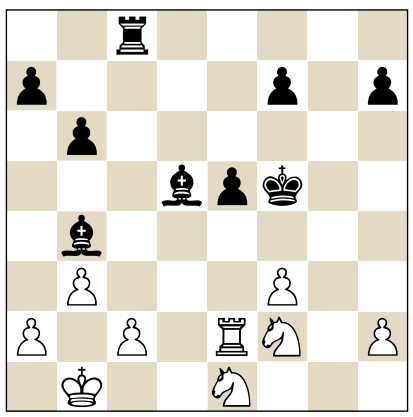
Which was 28...f4! 29.♘e4+ ♗xe4!. This looks somewhat counter-intuitive, good bishop, bad bishop and all that, but in fact Black is just winning: 30.♖xe4 h5! 31.h3 ♔g5, and the king sneaks in and sooner or later the f3 soldier will fall.

29.gxf5?!

This position is, in fact, still defensible for White, but within five moves he collapses.

He should have played 29.♘fd3! ♗c3 30.♘xe5 ♗xe5 31.g5+ ♔e6 32.♘d3 f6 33.gxf6 ♗xf3 34.♖xe5+ ♔xf6, and although Black is exerting heavy pressure, the game goes on.

29...♔xf5



30.♘g2 The knights are a bit confusing, but I realized that once I dropped my d5-bishop back and went ...f6 there would no longer be any tricks left in the position.

30.♘e4 is losing nicely: 30...♗xe1! 31.♘d6+ ♔f4 32.♘xc8 ♗b4, and the pawns, supported by the king and the bishops, are going to be rolling down the board.

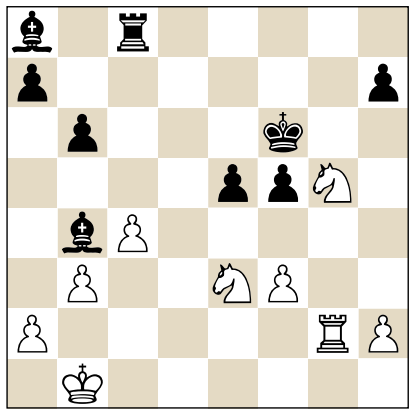
30.♘ed3 ♗c3 31.♘e4 ♗xe4 32.fxe4+ ♔e6 must also be lost. White's king is in the box, and one passed pawn will be enough for Black to win.

30...♗a8 31.c4 f6 32.♘e4 ♔e6 33.♘e3 f5!

After avoiding the forks and tricks, eventually there comes the time to push your stuff forward.

Before travelling home, Pentala Harikrishna, Ding Liren, Yu Yangyi, Anish Giri, Michael Adams and Peter Svidler gave a simul against kids.

34.♘g5+ ♔f6 35.♖g2



35...♖c7! The last precise move, preparing ...h6. White is totally lost. The rest was unnecessary.

36.♘c2 ♗c5 37.b4 ♗f8 38.♘h3 ♗xf3 39.♖g8 ♗h6 40.c5 bxc5 41.b5 ♖b7 42.a4 a6 43.♖c8 axb5 44.a5 ♖a7 45.♖xc5 ♖xa5 46.♘f2 ♗f8 47.♖c7 ♗e7 48.♘e3 f4 49.♘eg4+ ♗xg4 50.♘xg4+ ♔e6 51.♘f2 ♖a4 52.♖b7 ♖b4+ 53.♔c2 f3 54.♘d3 ♖c4+ 55.♔d1 ♖d4 56.♔c2 b4

White resigned.

■ ■ ■

Given Anish's dominance in the first half of the event, I can't help showing a fragment of his 5th-round game against Peter Svidler. Disaster struck for Giri, and in hindsight it can be seen as a turning point in his event.

Ding Liren took the sole lead by defeating his compatriot Yu Yangyi in a deceptively simple-looking game.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

Ding Liren
Yu Yangyi
Shenzhen 2017 (6)
Réti, King's Indian Attack

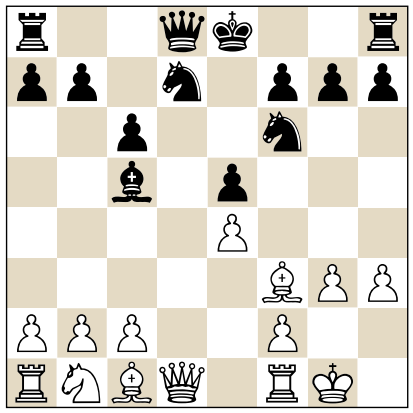
In Round 6, Ding Liren won his second game and grabbed the lead, which was never challenged. He did so in very straightforward fashion.

1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 ♗g4 3.♗g2 c6 4.0-0 ♘d7 5.h3 ♗xf3

The lazy way. Kramnik played this against me in a blitz game, while Eljanov, in a classical game, decided to keep the bishop. If you keep the bishop, there is some risk that it will end up being a bad bishop. But it might also end up to being a good bishop. Oh really? Thanks, Captain Obvious.

6.♗xf3 ♘gf6 7.d3 e5 8.e4 dxe4 9.dxe4 ♗c5

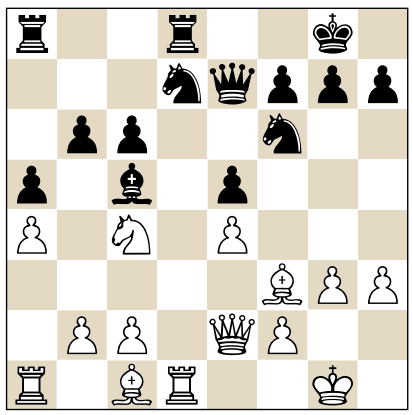
Such a position is a matter of personal preference. I know plenty of people who would say that Black is very solid and has no problems whatsoever, but there are also believers in the bishop pair, who stick with the bishops no matter how abstract their influence is.



10.♘d2 0-0 11.a4 a5 12.♕e2

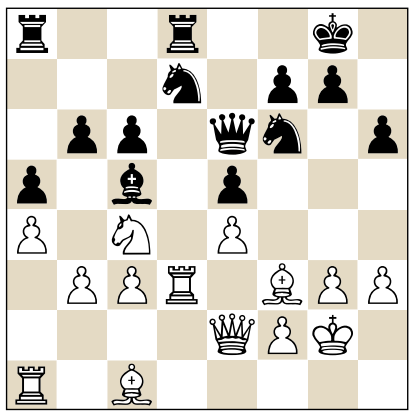
A natural set-up.

12...♕e7?! 13.♖d1 ♖fd8?! 14.♘c4 b6

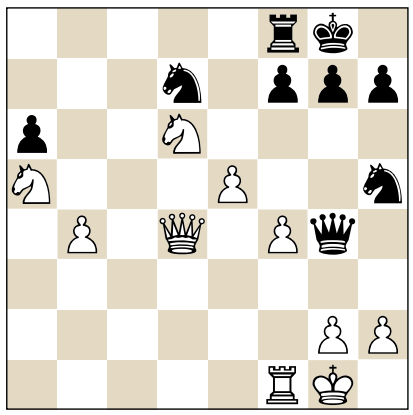


If this is a move Black has to make, then something has gone wrong in the opening. Perhaps the queen would have been better on c7, from where it would protect the a5-pawn, making ...b5!? possible.

15.♔g2 h6 16.♖d3 ♕e6 17.b3 ♗d4 18.c3 ♗c5



Anish Giri
Peter Svidler
Shenzhen 2017 (5)



position after 34.♖f1

Black is completely busted, but with Anish in severe time-pressure Peter raises the stakes and throws in: **34... g5.**

Here I assume that a mere 30 seconds extra on the clock would have sufficed for Anish to find 35.♘c6 ♘xf4 36.♘e7+ ♔h8 37.e6+ f6 38.♖xf4!, and curtains.

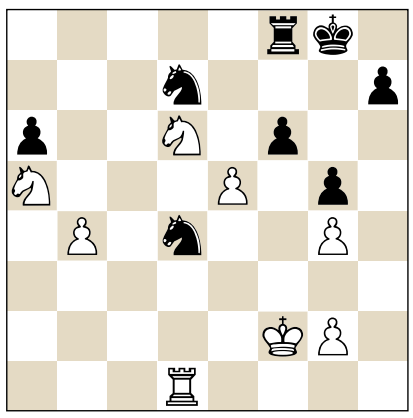
35.h3? ♘xf4!

Ouch!

36.hxg4 ♘e2+ 37.♔f2

In fact, 37.♔h2 ♘xd4 38.♖d1 ♘e6 39.♘dc4, which forces 39...♘b8, is still highly unpleasant, but at this point evil spirits had taken a firm hold of this game!

37...♘xd4 38.♖d1 f6!!



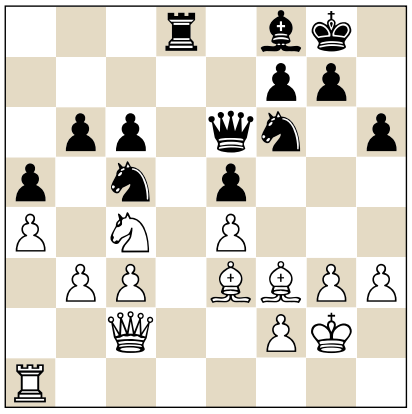
The fact that the e5-pawn is threatened to be taken with check means the d4-knight is indirectly defended.

39.e6

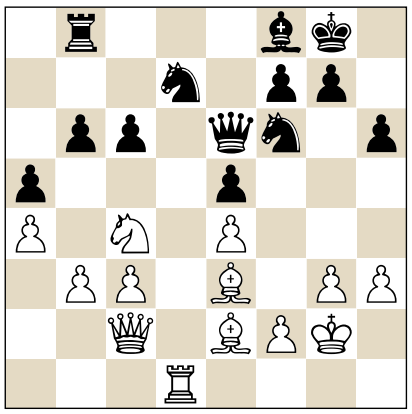
... and draw agreed! 'I was too ashamed to play on,' Svidler said afterwards. He had every reason to do so, though, given the trend had shifted dramatically in his favour. Objectively, though, White has enough compensation to hold the balance after 39...♘xe6 40.♘dc4 ♘e5 41.♖d6.

Following these missed opportunities, Giri shared the lead with Ding Liren after the first half. In Round 6, Ding scored a crucial win, defeating his compatriot Yu Yangyi. Anish provides the details of this deceptively simple-looking game.

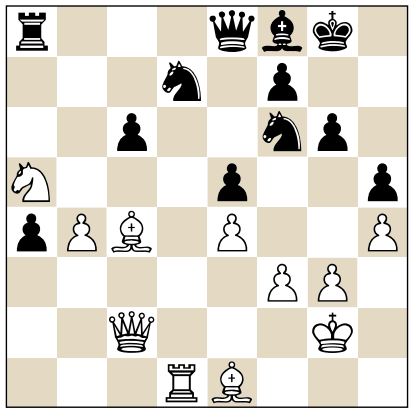
19.♕d1?! 19.♗e3! is a very inventive suggestion by the computer. After 19...♗xe3 20.♕xe3 ♘c5 21.♖dd1! it turns out that either the b6-pawn or the d-file has to go. This is huge.
19...♗e7?! This gains Black the d-file, but only temporarily.
19...♕e7 is more natural.
20.♗e3 ♘c5 21.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 22.♕c2 ♗f8



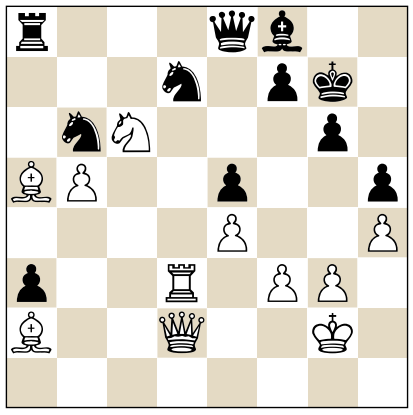
23.♖b1! Forcing Black to abandon the d-file after all.
23...♖b8 24.♖d1 ♘cd7 25.♗e2



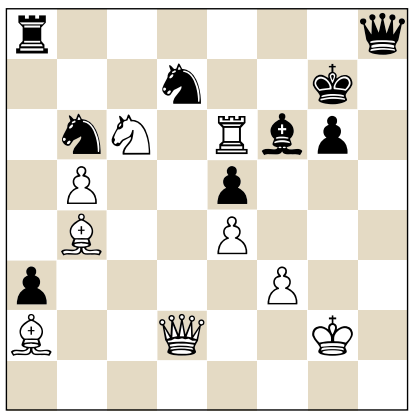
25...♘c5?
It is likely that f3 is, in fact, a useful move, so this manoeuvre is counter-productive.
Therefore, 25...♗c5! was stronger: 26.♗c1 ♖a8 (preparing ...b5 and forcing White to make some choices) 27.♘e3!? ♗f8, and although White is having a great time here, he is somewhat less nicely coordinated than in the game.
26.f3 ♘cd7 27.♗f2 g6 28.♗e1 h5 29.h4 White is now fully ready for the b4 push.
29...♖a8 30.b4! Excellent timing.
30...axb4 31.cxb4 b5 32.♘a5 bxa4 33.♗c4 ♕e8



34.♘xc6! Correctly judging that the a3-pawn is totally harmless. White is dominating. **34...a3 35.b5 ♘b6 36.♗a2 ♘fd7 37.♗a5 ♗c5 38.♖d3 ♔g7 39.♗c3 ♔h7 40.♕d2 ♗f8 41.♗a5 ♔g7**



42.g4! White is standing too well for such a breakthrough not to work.
42...♗e7 43.gxh5 ♗xh4 44.hxg6 fxg6 45.♖d6 ♗f6 46.♖e6 ♕f8 47.♗b4 ♕h8 White is completely winning, but it is always good when there is a rough finisher:



48.♘xe5! ♘xe5 49.♖xf6!
Ouch!
49...♕h5 50.♗c3 ♖a7 51.♕f4
Complete domination and demolition. Black resigned.

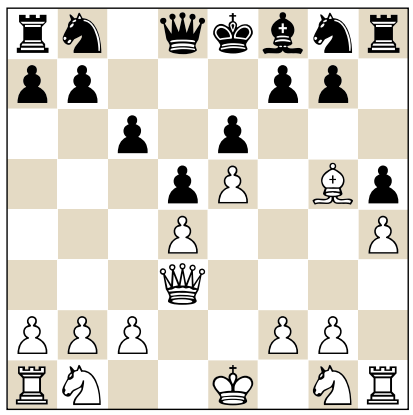
■ ■ ■

Giri and Ding Liren drew their encounter in the next round, and since all games in Rounds 8 and 9 were drawn as well, we were up for a nice finale! Giri, half a point behind Ding and facing Yu Yangyi with the white pieces, had to try and win, while Harikrishna, one point behind, was facing the tournament leader with the white pieces. Finally, a scenario was imaginable that Svidler would become one of four winners, were he to defeat Mickey Adams, with both Yu Yangyi and Harikrishna winning as well. Adams came to China having had a great streak and a majestic 2761 rating behind his name. In Shenzhen, however, he had a tough time and lost that last-round encounter against Svidler to end on -3.

NOTES BY
Erwin l'Ami

Michael Adams
Peter Svidler
Shenzhen 2017 (10)
Caro-Kann, Advance Variation

1.e4 c6
Although Svidler has played the Caro-Kann occasionally throughout his career, he has done so extremely rarely over the past few years, so this must have come as a bit of a surprise to Adams.
2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♗f5 4.h4 h5 5.♗d3 ♗xd3 6.♕xd3 e6 7.♗g5



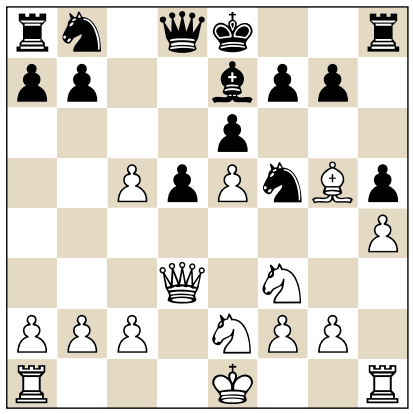
7...♗e7
The big guru in this line, Alexander

Morozevich, showed that 7...♕b6 8.♘d2 c5 9.c4! ♕xb2 10.♖d1 gives White very dangerous compensation. An important point is that 10...♕xd4 11.♕b3! ♕xe5+ 12.♘e2 is overwhelming. Black is completely underdeveloped.

8.♘f3 ♘h6 9.♘c3

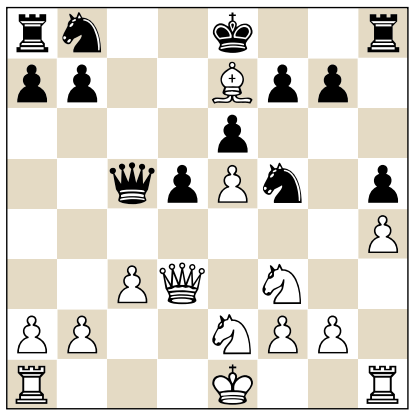
Instinctively, one would prefer to keep the c3-square for the pawn, but that would leave the b1-knight without a clear route. The knight will go to e2 and from there can determine its future moves. If the d4-pawn ever gets exchanged, that square would become available, but otherwise g3 and f4 are good alternatives.

9...♘f5 10.♘e2 c5 11.dxc5

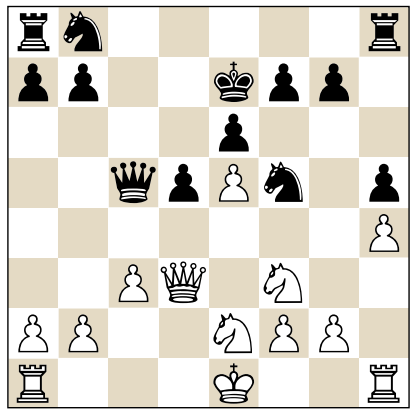


11...♕a5+ Deviating from the game Adams-Navara, Wijk aan Zee 2016, which continued 11...♘a6 12.♕b5+ ♕d7 13.♕xd7+ ♔xd7, with an equal endgame. I assume Mickey wanted to improve with 12.♗xe7 ♕xe7 13.♕b5+ ♕d7 14.♕a5!, and Black has serious issues to solve.

12.c3 ♕xc5 13.♗xe7



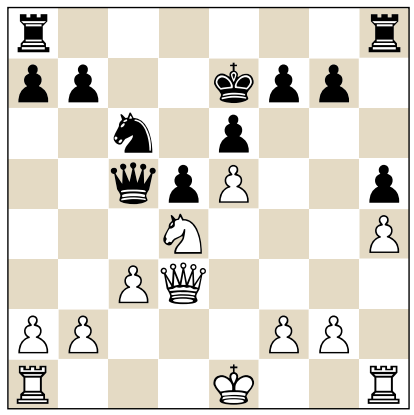
13...♔xe7!? Brave! Instead, 13...♕xe7 was perhaps more simple. With Black about to finish development with ...♘c6 and ...0-0, he doesn't have much to fear. The game continuation is an attempt to funk it up.



14.♘ed4?!

This is probably based on a miscalculation, since 14.0-0 ♘c6 15.♕d2!? poses some questions. For instance, 15...g6 16.♕g5+ ♔f8 17.♖ac1!?, and because of Black's king position there are still some problems to solve.

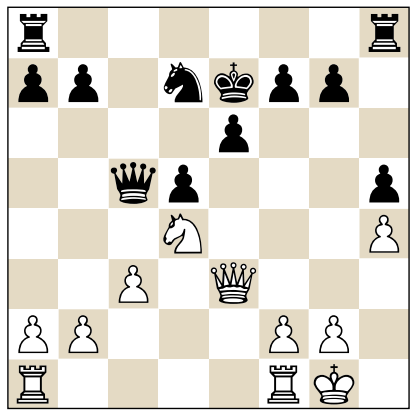
14...♘xd4 15.♘xd4 ♘c6



16.0-0

I assume this is the reason why Adams decided on 14.♘ed4. The alternative 16.♕e3 ♘xd4 17.cxd4 ♕b4+ 18.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 19.♔xd2 is the definition of equality.

16...♘xe5 17.♕e3 ♘d7

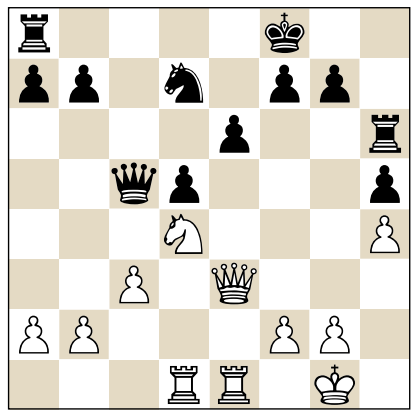


With the queen covered on c5, there is little to fear from a check on f5. The onus is on White now to show he has long-term compensation.

18.♖fe1?! 18.♖ad1, with the idea to meet 18...♔f8 with 19.c4!, was the way to go, trying to open files. Now 19...e5 (19...dxc4 20.♘xe6+! fxe6 21.♖xd7 is something to avoid) 20.♘f5 ♕xe3 (20...d4 21.♕g5 g6 22.b4! ♕xb4 23.♖b1 looks very risky) 21.fxe3 is completely fine for White.

18...♔f8 19.♖ad1 19.c4 can simply be captured now, since there is no more ♘xe6+ in the position.

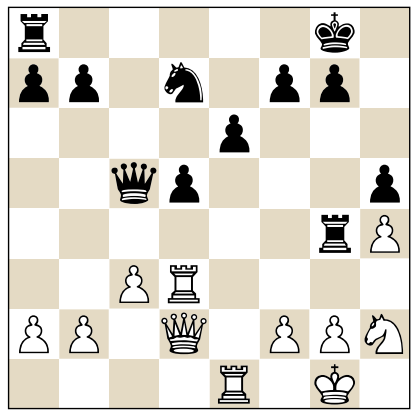
19...♖h6!



Excellent! The rook prevents any tricky business on e6, while preparing active counterplay via g6.

20.♖d3 For better or worse, 20.c4 had to be played. Now both 20...dxc4 21.♕f3 and 20...♕xc4 21.♖c1 ♕b4 22.♖c7 give some kicking chances.

20...♔g8 21.♕d2 ♖g6 22.♘f3 ♖g4 23.♘h2



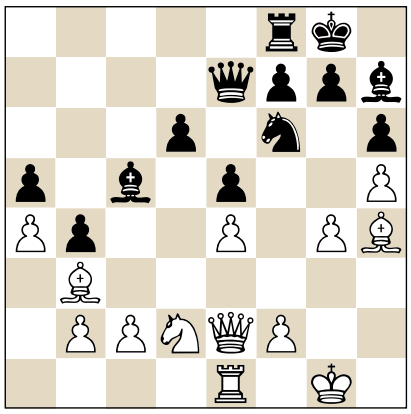
23...♖xh4! Not fearing any ghosts!

24.♕g5 ♖e4! The point, after 25.♖xe4 dxe4 the d7-knight once again does a great job defending the queen.

25.♖ee3 ♘f6 Two pawns down; the rest is agony. Exemplary play by Svidler! **26.b4 ♕b6 27.♖g3 ♖e1+ 28.♘f1 ♘g4 29.♖de3 ♖a1 30.♖e2 ♕a6 31.♕d2 ♖c8 32.♕b2 ♖b1** White resigned.

But the other games did not fall Svidler's way. Yu Yangyi easily held his own in a solid Petroff, while Harikrishna went astray in a complicated middlegame position.

Pentala Harikrishna
Ding Liren
Shenzhen 2017 (10)



position after 23.♘d2

Strategically speaking, a very dangerous position for Black. If White can force ♗xf6 gxf6, the bishop on h7 will be buried alive. Ding sets a cunning trap.

23...♔h8!? 24.♕f3?

Walking right into the storm. The computer indicates 24.♔f1!?, with the idea of getting out of the g1-a7 diagonal. Instead, g2 is a less ideal square for the king in view of a future ...♕b7, or the opening of the g-file. A definitive assessment probably depends on the position after 24...♗d4 (24...g5 25.♗g3 ♔g7 26.f3! is a huge difference compared to the game) 25.f3 ♗xb2, which is less clear than your engine will tell you at first!

24...g5! Made possible because of Black's last move and effectively ending the game! Opening the f-file is too much, so Hari's reply is forced.

25.♗g3 ♔g7 White is not in time to organize his defence. There is no stopping ...♕d7, when the g-pawn will fall. **26.♘c4 ♕b7 27.♕d3** Or 27.♘xa5 ♕a8!, followed by ...♗xe4. **27...♘xe4 28.♘xa5 ♕c7** Game over. Everything is hanging now. **29.♖xe4 ♕xa5 30.♕d5 ♗xe4 31.♕xe4** Pentala struggled on for a while, but Ding converted convincingly.

That catapulted Ding Liren one point clear of the field and made him the winner of the 1st Longgang Masters. While all eyes are already on the next generation of Chinese players, led by Wei Yi, Ding proved that he is still China's number 1 player, and in his usual friendly and somewhat shy manner he expressed his delight in a speech at the closing ceremony.

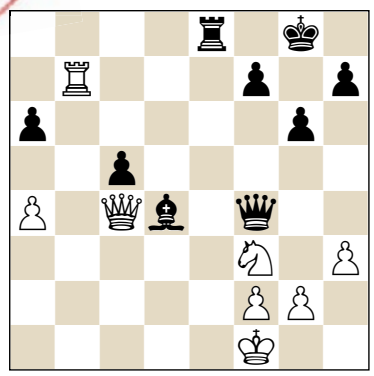
At that same closing ceremony I was surprised to walk into Hou Yifan. It turned out that just two days after the finish of the Longgang Masters, the same tournament hall would be used for a match between Hou Yifan and Vassily Ivanchuk! And according to Cindy Li of the Chinese Chess Association, there are many more events to come. Chess is booming in China! ■

Three wins and a 2865 performance brought 24-year-old Ding Liren tournament victory.

Shenzhen 2017 **cat.XXI**

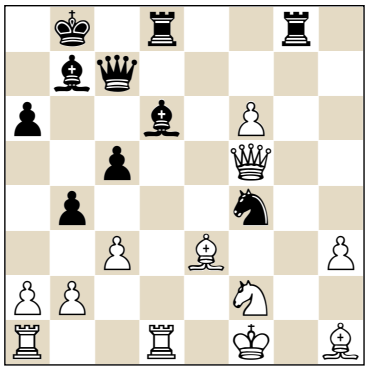
				1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
1	Ding Liren	IGM CHN	2759	* *	½ ½	1 ½	½ 1	½ 1	½ ½	6½	2865
2	Anish Giri	IGM NED	2769	½ ½	* *	½ ½	½ ½	1 ½	½ ½	5½	2789
3	Peter Svidler	IGM RUS	2741	0 ½	½ ½	* *	½ ½	½ 1	½ 1	5½	2795
4	Yu Yangyi	IGM CHN	2750	½ 0	½ ½	½ ½	* *	½ ½	½ ½	4½	2721
5	Pentala Harikrishna	IGM IND	2758	½ 0	0 ½	½ 0	½ ½	* *	1 1	4½	2720
6	Michael Adams	IGM ENG	2761	½ ½	½ ½	½ 0	½ ½	0 0	* *	3½	2645

MAXIMize your Tactics Solutions



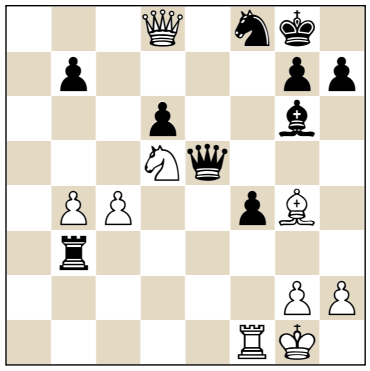
1. Buhmann-Vitiugov
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2017

29...♖e1+! White eluded 30.♘xe1 ♕xf2 mate but resigned after **30.♔xe1 ♗xf2+**.



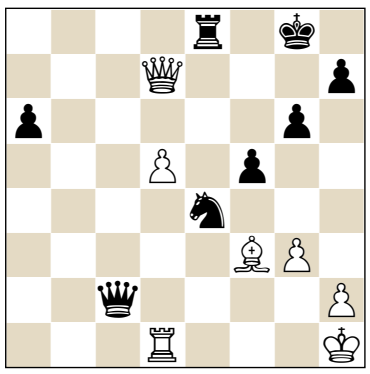
2. Yu Yangyi-Khismatullin
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2017

After 32...♗xh1 White could resist by 33.♖xd6! **32...♖g1+! 33.♔xg1 ♘e2+ 34.♔f1 ♘g3+** was decisive.



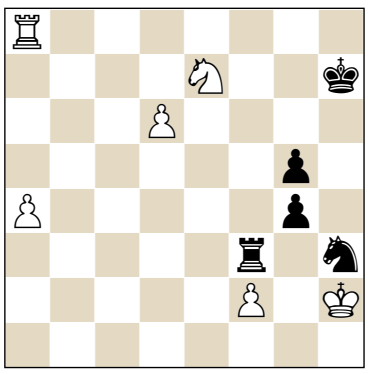
3. Oleksienko-Nguyen
Czech Republic 2017

30.♗e6+! ♕xe6 Letting go of the f-pawn. **31.♘e7+ ♔f7 32.♖xf4+ ♕f6 33.♖xf6+** and White won.



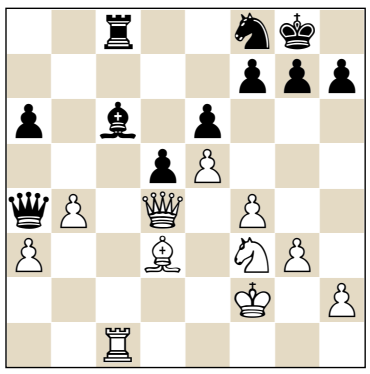
4. Espinoza-Grigoryan
Roquetas de Mar 2017

38...♘f2+ 39.♔g1 ♘h3+ 40.♔h1 ♖e2! 41.♗xe2 White quickly runs out of reasonable checks: 41.♕d8+ ♔g7 42.♕d7+ ♔h6. **41...♕e4+** Mating on the next move.



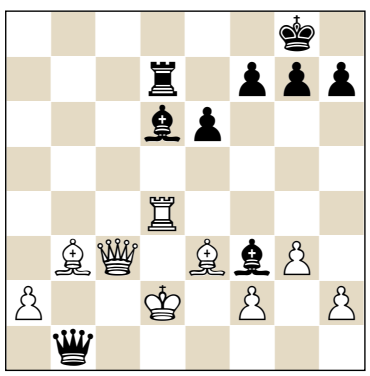
5. S.Zhigalko-Badelka
Minsk 2017

After 57...♖xf2+ 58.♔g3 ♖d2 59.♔xg4 ♘f2+ 60.♔f3 Black lost. She could save herself with the neat **57...g3+! 58.fxg3 g4!** when White is unable to escape perpetual check.



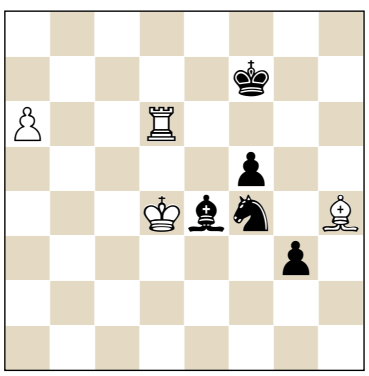
6. Sasikiran-Svane
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2017

23.b5! axb5 24.♕xa4 bxa4 25.♗a6! Less clever is 25.♗b5 ♗b7, allowing Black to unpin. **25...♗b7** Or 25...♖c7 26.♘d4. **26.♖xc8 ♗xa6 27.♖b8** Black resigned.



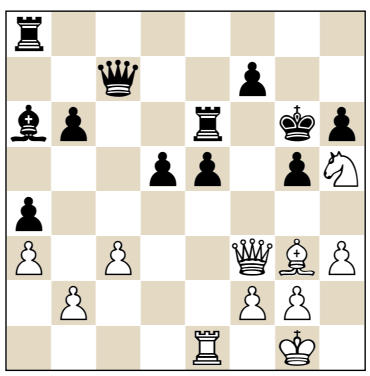
7. Swiercz-Ashwin
Internet 2017

32...♗b4! 33.♕xb4 After 33.♖xd7 ♕b2+ the white queen as well as the king perish. **33...♕b2+ 34.♔d3** 34.♗c2 ♕xb4+ is no defence. **34...♗e2+! 35.♔e4 ♕b1+** In view of 36...♕f5 mate, White resigned.



8. Buhmann-Gordievsky
Moscow Aeroflot Open 2017

In the game Black drew miraculously after 61.♖d7+ ♔e6 62.♖e7+ ♔d6 63.♖xe4 fxe4 64.a7 ♘e6+ 65.♔xe4 ♘c7 66.♗xg3+ ♔c6 67.♗xc7 ♔b7!. White missed **61.♗xg3! ♘e2+ 62.♔c5 ♘xg3 63.♖c6!** and the pawn is unstoppable.



9. Riff-Gulamali
Gibraltar 2017

27.♖xe5! ♕e7 28.♕f5+! ♔xh5 29.♗f4!! Black lost after **29...♕f6 30.g4+ ♔h4 31.♔h2!**. If 29...♖xe5 30.♗xe5 ♖e8, 31.♗f4!! again wins (31.g4+ ♔h4 32.♕f3 ♕xe5 33.♕xf7 ♕e1+ is a draw): 31...♕e1+ 32.♔h2 ♕xf2 33.♕xf7+ ♔h4 34.♗xg5+.

Hans Ree

The joy of craziness

On February 6, the American philosopher Raymond Smullyan died at the age of 97. **HANS REE** was a fan long before he knew that Smullyan was also a composer of retrograde chess problems.

Raymond Smullyan was a versatile man. As a student he supported himself as a magician, performing in nightclubs under the names Five Ace Merril or Chief Mishugi. His first regular job was as a college teacher of music, but he had to give it up when tendonitis prevented him from playing the piano. He became a mathematician, a logician, a philosopher and a prolific writer, and starting at the age of 16 he worked as a chess problem composer in the esoteric field of retrograde analysis.

One might think that composing chess problems was just a hobby for this professor of philosophy, but all his writings for the general reader, regardless of whether they were on religion, mysticism or mathematical logic, have a lightness that makes his whole life appear a hobby.

Not knowing about his involvement in chess, I became a fan after I had read his book *The Tao is silent*, a small volume from 1977. I read and re-read it until my copy almost disintegrated.

It should not be considered as a treatise on Taoism as it actually exists. As I've related here before, the Dutch writer Rudy Kousbroek once met a Japanese professor in Paris who told him that he dearly missed the food that he had known in Japan. Not Japanese food, because that was in ample supply in Paris. What he missed was European food prepared in Japanese style. That existed only in Japan.

Smullyan's Tao, old Chinese wisdom prepared and seasoned by a modern American logician, does not exist in China or Japan. It's vintage Smullyan.

The first chapter consists of one page and is called 'Chinese philosophy in a nutshell'. It ends with a little poem in the style of Laotse:

The Sage falls asleep not
because he ought to
Nor even because he wants to
But because he is sleepy

The Sage is like Smullyan's dogs Peekaboo, Peekatoo and Trixie.

Later, there is a chapter on crazy and sensible philosophy. Typically for Smullyan, he prefers crazy philosophies, which in his view are characterized by madness, spontaneity, humour, freedom from convention and a host of other fine qualities, the most important one being that they come far closer to the truth than the sensible philosophies.

According to Smullyan, psychologists, psychiatrists, economists, sociologists and political scientists tend toward the 'sensible', whereas, to his delight, artists, theoretical physicists and mathematicians tend toward the 'crazy'. For many years, *The Tao is silent* was a bible for me.

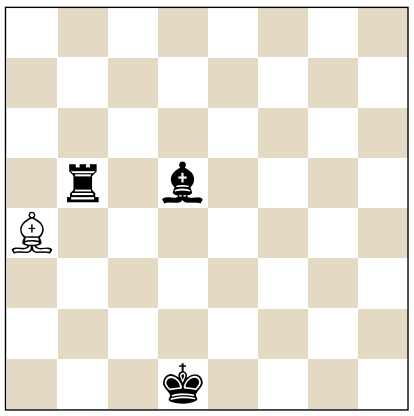
With some regret, let's move on to chess.

A retro trifle

As I went through most of my life without the faintest idea about retrograde problems, I suspect that some readers may be in the same situation.

Whereas endgame studies and problems ask what the play will be from the diagrammed position provided, retrograde problems ask questions about the past of the position. What does the position tell us about the moves that led up to it?

I cannot give an example of a full-fledged retrograde here, since the chains of arguments involved in the solution are often so complex that they would overflow the space of this article. I'll give you the simplest retrograde that I know, which is number 1 of Smullyan's collection *The Chess Mysteries of the Arabian Knights*. Just a trifle to give his readers a taste.



The white king, an accomplished sorcerer, is invisible. On what square does it stand?

The solution is that the king is on c3 and that the previous moves have been 1...♗d5+ 2.c2-c4 b4xc3+ 3.♔b3xc3+. Of course, the essence of the solution is the proof that it couldn't have been otherwise.

Retrogrades are much farther removed from playing chess than the common mating problems, which makes them unpalatable to many chess players. On the other hand, there are many people who do not play chess, but at some point have learned the rules. If they love puzzles, retrograde analysis may be their thing, as the only required knowledge consists of these rules. Chess expertise is irrelevant.

The perfect gift

Smullyan published two books with his problems, *The Chess Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes* (1979) and *The Chess Mysteries of the Arabian Knights* (1981).

Because he enlivened his problems by wrapping them in stories, the books became quite popular and were reprinted several times in several languages. I liked the stories about Holmes and was impressed by the reasoning of the problem solutions. But what do the experts think? On the website Retro-Corner I found this:

'*The Chess Mysteries of Sherlock Holmes*, by Raymond Smullyan (1979). Fifty problems inserted into a Sherlock Holmes story. Very entertaining introduction to retro problems. The perfect gift. You learn the basics, as Holmes teaches Watson! Problems are quite simple but complexity is not the point here. Contains several monochromatic problems.'

The perfect gift. Is this damning by faint praise by a haughty expert? As a layman in the field, I did not find the problems simple at all.

I wanted to have a more extensive technical review by an acknowledged expert in the field. Luckily, I knew one of the greatest experts in retro-analysis: Harry Goldsteen.

Creative destruction

On his *Chess Curiosities* website Tim Krabbé writes that in 2000 the Dutch quarterly *Probleemblad* (Problem Magazine) nominated 32 compositions in eight categories for 'problem (or study) of the millennium'. One of these was a retrograde by Goldsteen, a great honour.

'Smullyan prefers crazy philosophies, which in his view are characterized by madness, spontaneity, humour, freedom from convention.'

There was a time when Goldsteen and I were living in the same Amsterdam neighbourhood and used to see each other regularly on the streets, in the chess café beneath his apartment or at my place. Sometimes he wrote me letters with analyses of baffling complexity.

In 1991, I wrote a chess column in the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad* with the title 'Goldsteen demolishes his own work of art'. It's about an endgame study by the Dutch composer Carel Mann which was found to be faulty by Goldsteen. With tremendous effort he repaired it, but then to his great regret he found a cook. My column left him while he was working to repair his reparation.

I shed a little tear after digging up this old article as I found that between 1991 and now the space allotted to me in the newspaper had gradually been halved.

Then Goldsteen moved in with a woman friend who lived in North Amsterdam, a borough which is firmly separated from the rest of the city by the river IJ. We lost contact.

About four years ago, after his partner had died, he moved to Beth Shalom, a Jewish home for the elderly in Buitenveldert, a suburb in the South of Amsterdam. I didn't know that at the time. He isn't all that old, only 77 now, but his eyesight had deteriorated to the point that he was almost blind.

As Beth Shalom had told me that Harry didn't have a private phone, which turned out to be wrong, I came at his room unannounced.

Still at the board

There was a chessboard on his table. As in the past, we didn't need many preliminaries before coming to the point. As he started to explain the finer points of the position, I thought I recognized it from another article by Krabbé, and it did turn out to be the problem described in the latest entry of his website: 'Harry Goldsteen's furthest position'.

It was a problem ('how far can a position be removed from the initial position?') in which Goldsteen had established a world record, but since he wasn't sure that the record couldn't be improved upon, it was still a work in progress.

A few years ago he had still been able to read with a strong magnifying glass, but no longer. 'I am very good at masking my handicap', he said, and that would turn out to be true, both in his room, within the Beth Shalom building, and outside.

His position had five black bishops and four black rooks and since he had only one set of pieces, some of them were impersonated on the board by pawns.

'With your eyesight and your interest in crazy positions, shouldn't you get an extra set?' I asked. He smiled and said that he was managing fine.

But I had come to ask him about Smullyan. He remembered very well how much he had enjoyed the two books and their stories when they came out 'around 1980'. Together with a fellow-enthusiast he had found a few mistakes in Smullyan's books, but that didn't really matter.

We talked about the old days and about the characters of the old chess café, many of whom had died. When I took my leave, he said that he had worked out the solution of the study of Carel Mann on which I had written in 1991, and that he would show it to me on my next visit. He led me through the building and out the front door and then went back to his chessboard. He had not given me the extensive technical review I had come for, but I didn't mind. ■

Will Vladimir Fedoseev break through to join the elite?

‘A young Mike Tyson’

A feat had long been expected of him. Vladimir Fedoseev is rightly regarded as the leader of the generation of Russian players born in the mid-1990s, and this is a very strong generation with players like Daniil Dubov, Vladislav Artemiev and Grigory Oparin. Fedoseev is a maximalist: if he is on form, he destroys all and everything. Thus in 2013, he became U-18 Champion of Europe and he has won tournaments at classical, rapid and blitz time limits. In 2014, he finished third both in the World U-20 Championship (only the stars from the East, Lu Shanglei and Wei Yi, finished ahead of him) and in the adult European championship. He seemed to be ready for more, but in the next tournaments he competed in he seemed to lack a little something...

I got to know Volodya three or four years ago at one of the Russian junior championships. This open, benevolent, well-educated young man from St. Petersburg appealed to me with his eagerness for a fight and his love of chess. His trainers, GM Denis Evseev and former FIDE World Champion Alexander Khalifman, have given him a classical chess education, helped him to expand his horizons, and instilled in him a love for analytical work. Volodya happily experiments, using a variety of different opening set-ups. At the same time he is a competitor in the best sense of the word.

Many years ago I interviewed Vladimir Kramnik, and his words about Anatoly Karpov are etched in my memory: ‘When I started playing in super-tournaments, I was staggered by his ability to instantly readjust. This is how Karpov plays a game: he is under pressure, and for six hours he defends and consolidates – it is very difficult to breach his position, thanks to his brilliant calculation of variations and tenacious defending, making a draw seem almost a certainty. His opponent relaxes slightly, and the position becomes completely equal. Any person would promptly agree a draw and be pleased that this torture had at last come to an end. But at that point Karpov could begin playing for a win! He can very easily forget about what has happened on the board before; he can cut himself off from the history of the position.’ This is a very important quality – the ability to cut yourself off from the history of the position! In my opinion, it is also very well developed in the young man we are talking about here: Vladimir Fedoseev.

On the other hand, he also has his deficiencies, the chief of which, I think, is a certain emotional instability, vulnerability. If the mood isn’t right, his play suffers. Hence the serious lapses in form. You don’t have to go far to find examples. Late last year, Fedoseev made his debut in the Super-Final of the Russian Championship. He prepared for this important start very seriously, and he even changed his image: he grew a beard, like Dickens’s heroes – probably to give himself a more solid appearance. The fighting in the tournament was uncommonly tenacious, and almost to the very end no one cracked up and gave away points. At the start of the penultimate round, Fedoseev was sharing first place with Alexander Riazantsev, and if things had gone to a tie-break he would have been the favourite: at rapid chess Volodya

The 22-year-old Russian grandmaster Vladimir Fedoseev has won the Aeroflot Open in Moscow and earned a place in Dortmund – the first super-tournament in his career. He was also close to victory in the Winter Classic in St. Louis, but here his ultra-aggressive manner of play let him down in the last round. **VLADIMIR BARSKY** talks about a player who is capable of developing into a star of the first magnitude.

Vladimir Fedoseev: 'Although I do not especially believe in horoscopes, I look at them nearly every day.'

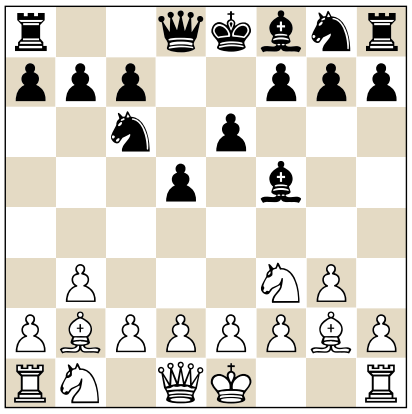
ETERI KUBLASHVILI

plays simply splendidly. But in the final round Oparin utterly crushed him in a game that was awarded the brilliancy prize. And a slump began. In the 'Nutcracker' tournament of generations, in Moscow just before the New Year, Fedoseev was only a pale shadow of himself...

But the new year arrived with new hopes. In the starting list of the Aeroflot Open, Vladimir was in a modest 18th place. In the first round, he decided to 'go wild', avoiding defeat only by a miracle.

Alejandro Ramirez
Vladimir Fedoseev
Moscow Aeroflot 2017 (1)
Réti, Nimzowitsch-Larsen Attack

1.♘f3 d5 2.b3 ♗f5 3.♗b2 e6 4.g3 ♘c6 5.♗g2



5...h5 6.d3 h4!? 7.♘xh4 ♖xh4 8.gxh4 ♕xh4

Following in the footsteps of his trainer... When I saw this highly questionable exchange sacrifice, I immediately remembered a game from the 1984 USSR Junior Championship, which I had observed with my own eyes: 1.e4 e5 2.♘c3 ♘c6 3.g3 h5!? 4.♘f3 h4 5.♘xh4 ♖xh4 6.gxh4 ♕xh4 7.♗g2 ♗c5 8.0-0 ♘f6 9.♕f3 d6 10.♕g3 ♕h7 11.d3 ♘d4 12.♗e3 ♗d7 13.b4 ♗b6 14.♖ac1 ♘h5 15.♕h4 c6 16.f3 ♘f5 17.exf5 ♗xe3+ 18.♔h1 ♗xc1 19.♖xc1 ♗xf5 20.♖e1 ♔d7 21.♘e2 ♖h8 22.d4 g5 23.♕f2 ♘f4 24.♗f1 ♗xc2 25.♘xf4 exf4 26.d5 ♗a4 27.b5 c5 28.♕e2 ♔c8 29.♕g2 ♗c2 30.♖e7 ♗f5 31.b6 axb6 32.♕b2 ♗d7 33.♔g1 g4 34.♗d3 ♕h4 35.♖xd7 ♔xd7 36.♗f5+ ♔c7 37.fxg4 ♕e1+ 38.♔g2 f3+ 39.♔xf3 ♕f1+, and White resigned; Dreev-Khalifman, Kirovabad 1984. Khalifman became champion, and the game became widely known in our country.

'As if I'm saying, look everyone, I can sacrifice the exchange 25 minutes after the start of the tournament, but you can't.'

Said Vladimir Fedoseev: 'Now, when the tournament is behind me, I am still asking myself the question: Why did I do this? What did I want to demonstrate? About only one thing there is no doubt: such a sacrifice is part of my chess character. I think this is comparable with a childish desire to demonstrate that you are not afraid to carry out a particular action, to loudly demonstrate – look everyone, I can sacrifice the exchange 25 minutes after the start of the tournament, whereas you can't. You are sitting there feeling envious.

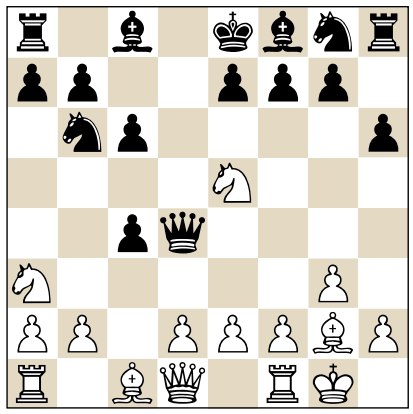
'But sometimes you also have to remember about responsibility and about the objectivity of a decision, to say nothing about the emotions which you force those close to you to endure, if they, God forbid, are watching your game.'

Vladimir defended tenaciously, drove his opponent into time-trouble and snatched a draw by repetition. After receiving a good dose of adrenalin at the start, Fedoseev started playing far more soundly, winning several games in good style. The decisive encounter occurred in Round 6. Fedoseev was half a point behind the leader Evgeny Najer, the winner of the 2016 Aeroflot Open, but he had White. Najer testifies: 'Objectively speaking, Vladimir did not give me any chances. His play was impressive, and he took important decisions instantly, without a shadow of a doubt – both in this specific game, and in the tournament in general'. Fedoseev became the sole leader, but the following day he again, as in the first round, played the opening extremely carelessly.

Dennis Khismatullin
Vladimir Fedoseev
Moscow Aeroflot 2017 (7)
Réti Opening

1.c4 c6 2.♘f3 d5 3.g3 dxc4 4.♗g2 h6 5.0-0 ♘d7 6.♘a3 ♘b6 7.♘e5! ♕d4

Fedoseev: 'Without calculating anything. I simply decided that my opponent had missed something'.



8.♘exc4! ♘xc4 9.♕a4

Fedoseev: 'It hardly needs saying that for such a cultured player as Denis Khismatullin, this position is a technical one, verging on dead-won. I already realized that all that was left for me was to grasp at straws, the chief of which could and should be my opponent's thoughtfulness. I endeavoured to adopt the required tempo to drive him into time-trouble.'

Vladimir saved the game in a position in which he was four (!) pawns down. Moreover, he not only saved the game, but at the end he even tried to play for a win (remember Kramnik's words about Karpov!), after which, by scoring 1½ out of 2 at the finish, Vladimir took sole first place.

For this article I had a short interview with the 22-year-old grandmaster, a student at one of Moscow's prestigious higher education institutes.

Vladimir, you were born on 16 February, the same day as the first Women's World Champion Vera Menchik. Do you attach any importance to this kind of coincidence?

'As no more than a pleasant coincidence. I try not to attach particular significance to portents and numerology, but things are more interesting with horoscopes: although I do not especially believe in them, I look at them nearly every day. I think that all chess players have some individual success habits; I, for example, wake up early on the day of a game.'

Today for young, educated people all avenues are open, and as regards career prospects and financial well-being, they are very attractive. Why did you nevertheless choose chess?

'The answer to this question is quite simple. First, I am a chess fanatic and I am incredibly fond of this game in all its manifestations. It is sufficient to look at the number of opening systems that I have employed, to understand that I am always searching. Second, since my childhood years I have succeeded in achieving results, and this determined my choice to be a chess professional.'

How good are the prospects for chess in the 21st century?

'Our prospects are terrible. We are not able to change and adapt to the changeable world, and the endless waiting for the moment when we will finally adjust to it again, may have dismal consequences.

'It is no secret that chess is an elite type of sport, and to make a living from it is not easy. For this reason I try to bring as many people as possible into chess, and we are now developing a 'Chess in schools' programme. I think that specifically in Russia a shift in the right direction was seen last year, when the clash for the title between Sergey Karjakin and World Champion Magnus Carlsen created enormous interest. Now we can see the first results of the intense activity of Karjakin's team.

'Ernesto Inarkiev has also succeeded in drawing attention to chess in the Caucasus region. I think that he will soon be joined by other players wanting to adopt an active social position and popularize the game.'

Let's go back a few months. Did your loss in the last round of the Super-Final seriously unsettle you? How did you overcome the crisis and prepare for 'Aeroflot'?

'I remember that after Novosibirsk I performed quite decently in the European Team Championship, including a win with Black against Sergey Rublevsky in the key match with 'Siberia', so that there was no immediate slump. However, I possibly overlooked the fact that this defeat was like a delayed-action bomb, and when the excellent form I had acquired before the Super-Final came to an end, I was not ready for the realities of life. As a result, my rating dropped to its lowest level since three years. Now I think that I did not work much on my game after that last-round defeat – the tempo of my work dropped, and this was probably the cause of my painful defeats.

'I began the new year without any special hopes, but I was able to arrive for the 'Aeroflot' well prepared, attentive, at some point even cautious, especially after my fighting fervour nearly cost me a full point in my game against Ramirez in the first round. Later an excessive desire to fight let me down in St. Louis, when I chose incredibly aggressive tactics, having firmly decided not to change them even for the sake of playing for first place.'

How important for you is the place in Dortmund that your victory in the Aeroflot Open brought you?

'Time will tell; today I cannot look into the future. I hope that Dortmund will be a chess festival for me, at which I will not be the last guest.

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

'For his debut in last year's Super-Final, Vladimir Fedoseev grew a beard, like Dickens' heroes – probably to give himself a more solid appearance.'

'Actually, it was the Winter Classic in St. Louis that I regarded as the main tournament at the start of this year. Here I was intending to make a breakthrough and play as aggressively as possible. I think that I succeeded in this, but I became a victim of my own aggression, and with incautious play against Shankland in the last round I conceded first place, which had practically already been won.'

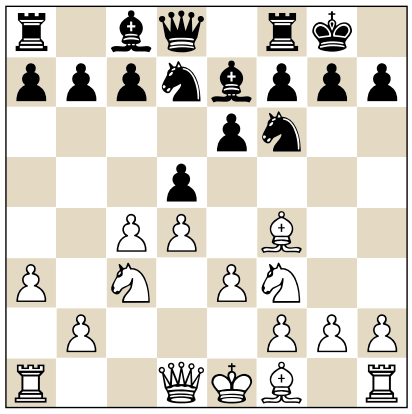
Let's see what the future has in store for Vladimir Fedoseev and where his ambitions will take him. Before we look at two of his games, let's listen to grandmaster Sergey Shipov's prediction: 'Fedoseev plays in an aggressive manner. When he is in good form, he is a fearsome force. And this force is capable of breaking the resistance of very strong grandmasters. He can put pressure on his opponent's position over the course of seven hours. He is a young Mike Tyson, who as yet does not have a very good defensive technique, but a very strong punch. So strong, that, I hope, Fedoseev may develop into a super-grandmaster.'

'Fedoseev plays in an aggressive manner. When he is in good form, he is a fearsome force.'

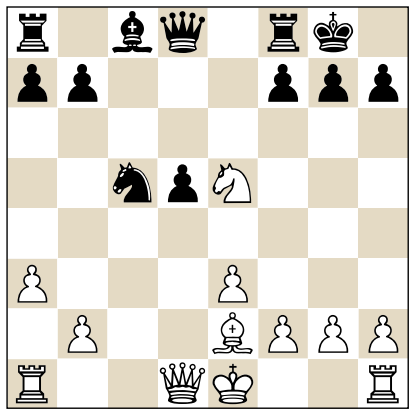
NOTES BY
Vladimir Fedoseev

Vladimir Fedoseev
Alexander Huzman
Moscow Aeroflot 2017
Queen's Gambit, Blackburn Variation

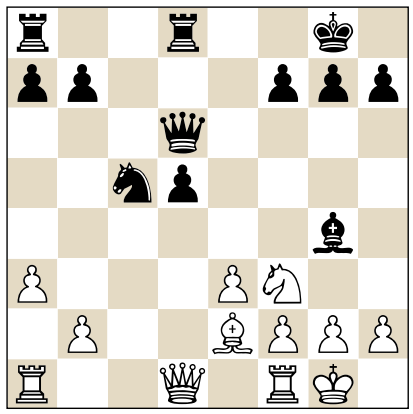
I should like to present my best game in the Aeroflot Open, played in Round 2, when I did not yet have any impression of the shape I was in. This game would show whether or not I was ready to fight for the top places.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3
Alexander Huzman plays many different openings, but in my preparations I was sure that if we were to reach this position it would be a Queen's Gambit.
4...♗e7 5.♗f4 0-0 6.e3 ♘bd7 7.a3 Aiming for simplification.



7...c5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♘xd5 exd5 10.dxc5 ♘xc5 11.♗e2 ♗f6 12.♗e5 ♗xe5 12...♗f5 13.0-0 ♗xe5 14.♘xe5 ♖c8 15.♖c1 ♕f6 16.b4 ♕xe5 17.bxc5 occurred in the game Mamedyarov-Kramnik, Tal Memorial 2016. **13.♘xe5**



13...♕d6
A logical continuation, but now Black is left with an isolani all his life.
I think that if 13...d4! worked, the variation would altogether have no point: 14.♕xd4 ♕xd4 15.exd4 ♘b3 16.♖d1 ♗f5 17.♗c4 ♗c2 18.♗xb3 ♗xb3 19.♖d3 ♗e6. Now it is White who has an isolani, but this is an extra pawn and it is passed. Black retains good drawing chances, but White has definite prospects. 13...♗f5 should transpose into the main position.
14.♘f3 ♗g4 15.0-0 ♖fd8

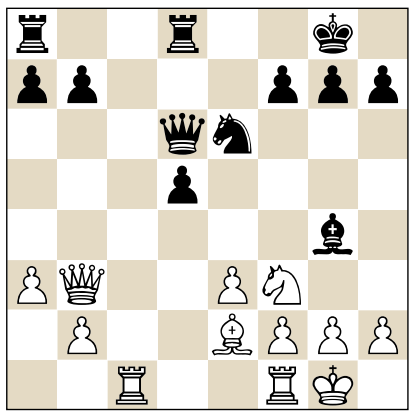


16.♖c1!?
It is good to maintain the tension. Now the ball is in Black's court, and

as soon as he chooses a set-up, White will react, depending on the situation. These are technical details, but 16.♘d4! is perhaps more accurate. White can rely on a simple plan with the holding of the d4-square and the exchange of all the minor pieces, in the hope of gradually enveloping the isolani. For example, 16...♗xe2 17.♕xe2 ♘e6 18.♖fd1 ♖ac8 19.♖d2 ♖c4 20.♖ad1 ♘xd4 21.♖xd4 ♖xd4 22.♖xd4 f5. White will be happy to obtain this type of position, where he can choose how to increase the pressure.

However, I was afraid that after 16...♗d7! my opponent would set up a barrier with the knight on e6 and bishop on c6, and I was afraid that with the light-squared bishops on the advantage might not be sufficient.

16...♘e6 17.♕b3



17...♕e7

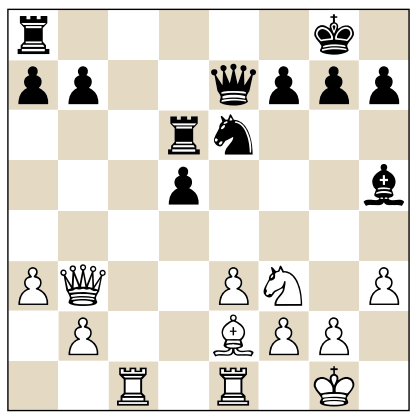
Here 17...d4!? had to be checked and seriously calculated, although perhaps it is also possible to play this purely intuitively: 18.♖fd1 ♕e7 19.h3. Here for some reason I only considered the capture on f3, but the bishop can simply be retreated: 19...♗h5 20.g4 ♗g6 21.♗f1!? (retaining the better piece arrangement) 21...h5 22.♘xd4 ♘xd4 23.♖xd4 ♖xd4 24.exd4 hxg4 25.♗g2 gxh3 26.♕xb7! and White is clearly better.

18.h3 ♗h5 19.♖fe1 ♖d6

Now Black wants to capture on f3 and triple his major pieces on the d-file. I was afraid of this regrouping, and so I reverted to the plan with the exchange of the minor pieces.

ETERI KUBLASHVILI

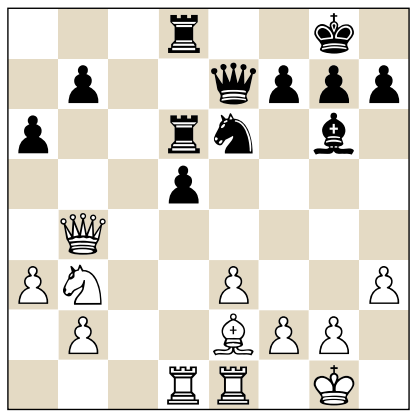
With his win in the Aeroflot Open, Vladimir Fedoseev earned an invitation to Dortmund.



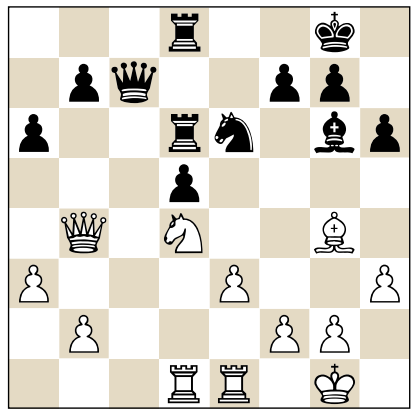
20.♖cd1! ♖ad8 21.♘d4 ♗g6

Here I somewhat lost the thread of the game. It is not easy to improve a position when all the pieces are excellently placed.

22.♕b4 a6 23.♘b3 Alternatives were 23.♗g4!? and 23.♗f3!.



23...♕c7! This excellent move refutes the idea with ♘b3-a5. **24.♘d4!** A Dvoretsky-like admission of my mistake. **24...h6 25.♗g4!?** It is hard to criticize this move, but the computer suggests admitting another 'mistake' and playing 25.♖c1!.



25...♕b6

A valid alternative was 25...♘xd4!? and now:

A) 26.exd4! leads to an interesting transformation. From the human point of view, White retains pressure for a number of reasons: the queenside pawns are more correctly placed for an ending with like-colour bishops, the e-file has been occupied, and the pieces are more actively placed;

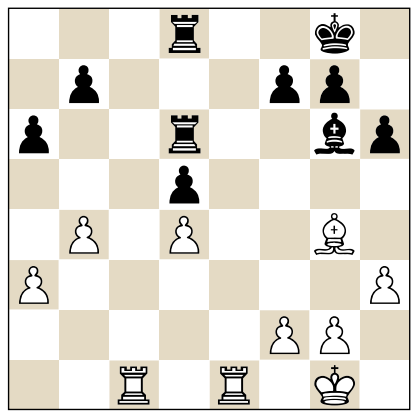
B) After 26.♕xd4 ♗c2!? (26...♖c6!). Black's main idea is counterplay on the c-file, but also the position of the light-squared bishop should not be forgotten: 27.♖d2 ♗e4;

C) 26.♖xd4 ♗e4!? and Black creates counterplay on the c-file!

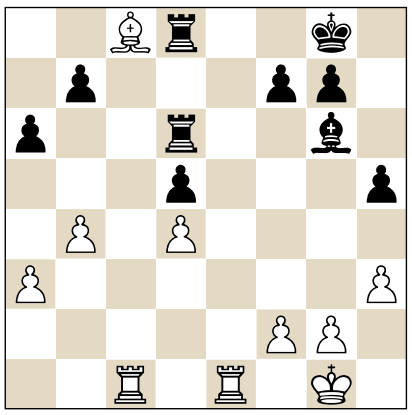
26.♕xb6! ♖xb6 27.b4 ♖bd6 28.♖c1

White takes control of the c-file, after which the position is a technical one.

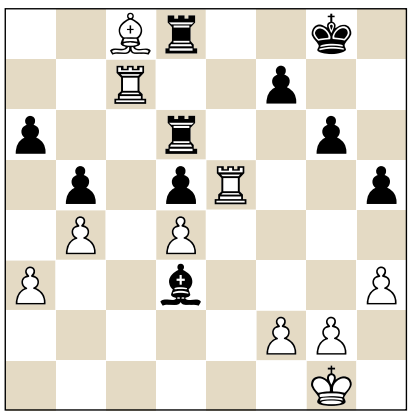
28...♘xd4 29.exd4



29...h5?! A serious inaccuracy. A pawn again stands on a square of the colour of the bishop, which means it becomes a potential target.
After 29...♗d3!? 30.♖c7 b6 White's advantage is also significant, but nothing concrete is immediately apparent.
30.♗c8

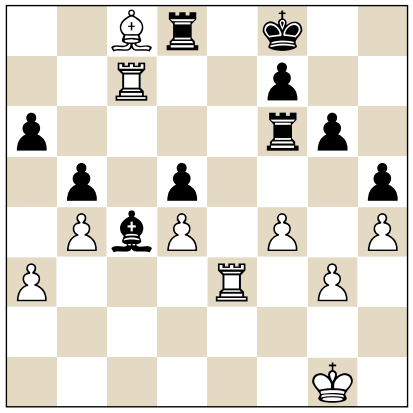


30...b5
30...♗d3! is a strong concrete idea, which could have seriously sharpened the battle: 31.♗xb7 ♗c4 32.♖e7 ♔f8 33.♖ce1 ♗b5! 34.♖c7 ♖6d7 35.♖ec1 ♗c4 36.♖xd7 ♖xd7 37.♗c6 ♖d6 38.♗a4 ♖e6. At the cost of a pawn Black has succeeded in exchanging a pair of rooks and activating his pieces, and his chances of a draw are considerable.
31.♖c7 ♗d3 32.♖e5
Provoking the last pawn onto a light square.
32...g6



33.♖e3!
Now I have succeeded in picturesquely fixing all the opponent's pawns on squares of the colour of the bishop, something that one is not often able to achieve.

33...♗c4 34.h4 ♖f6 35.g3 ♔f8 36.f4

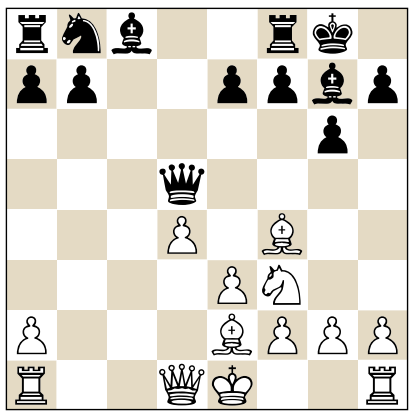


Now a simple hoisting advancement of the position is decisive.
36...♖b6 37.♔f2 ♖e8 38.♖e5 ♖d6 39.♔e3 f6 40.♖xe8+ ♔xe8 41.f5 g5 42.♖a7 gxh4 43.gxh4 ♔d8 44.♗e6 ♗b3 45.♖f7
Black resigned.

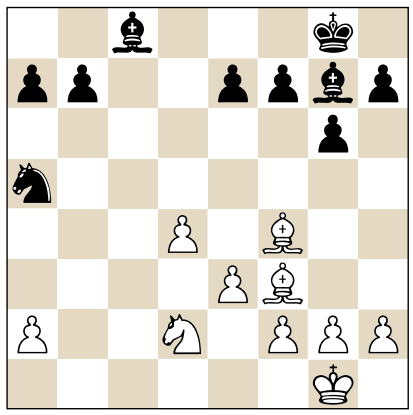
NOTES BY
Vladimir Fedoseev

Vladimir Fedoseev
Jeffery Xiong
St. Louis Winter Classic 2017 (7)
Grünfeld Indian Defence

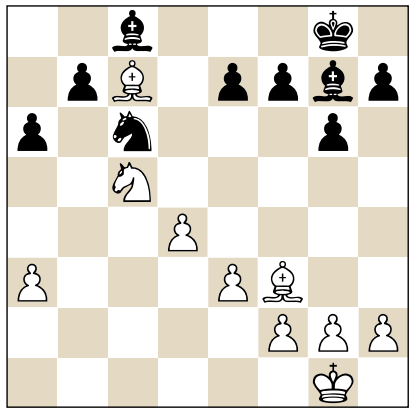
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.♘f3 ♗g7 5.♗g5 ♘e4 6.♗f4 ♘xc3 7.bxc3 c5 8.e3 0-0 9.cxd5 cxd4 10.cxd4 ♕xd5 11.♗e2
Unfortunately, the idea employed by me was cut short the following day by Yaroslav Zherebukh.
Possibly White has to carry out the additional manoeuvre 11.♗d3 ♗g4 12.0-0 ♘c6 13.♗e2.



11...♘c6 Instead, Zherebukh continued 11...♕a5+ 12.♕d2 ♕xd2+ 13.♔xd2 ♘c6 14.♖hc1 (14.♖hb1!? may be a better try) 14...♖d8! and Black was fine.
12.0-0 ♗f5 13.♕a4 ♕a5 14.♕xa5 ♘xa5 15.♘d2 ♖fc8 16.♖fc1 ♖xc1+ 17.♖xc1 ♖c8 18.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 19.♗f3

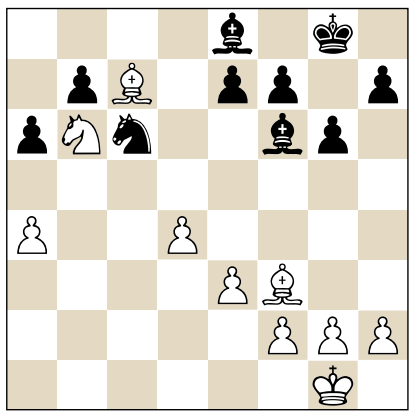


19...♗e6?! An inaccuracy. It was better to play 19...♘c6!? immediately. After 20.♗c7!? White has various ways of improving his position. Black is solidly but passively placed.
20.a3 ♗a2 21.♗b8 a6 22.♗c7 ♘c6 23.♘e4 ♗e6 24.♘c5 ♗c8

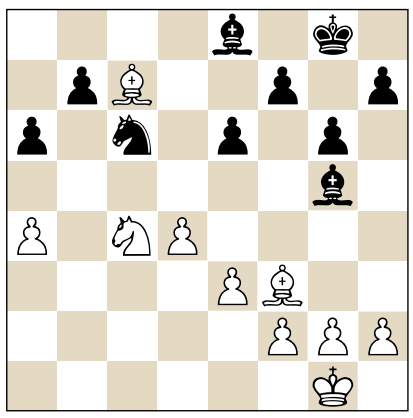


White has made some progress, but Black is still quite solidly placed.
25.♘a4?!
Simplicity is the guarantee of success, and White should have simply brought his king across to the queenside, rather than look for an immediate win. After 25.♔f1!? e6 26.♔e2 ♗f8 27.♗b6 we need not fear the exchange of bishop for knight, since Black's whole complex of dark squares is weakened, our king is more active, and by no means all the opposite-coloured-bishop endings are drawn.

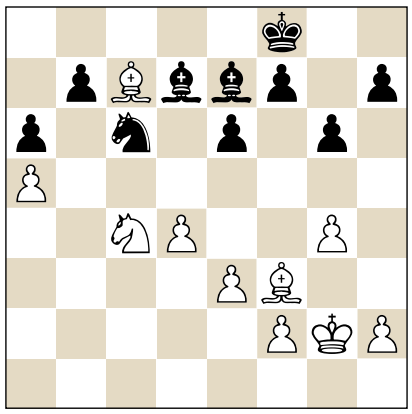
25...♗d7 26.♘b6 ♗e8
Now White has some problems with the coordination of his pieces.
27.a4 Quite a good plan aimed at fixing the queenside.
27...♗f6
I didn't understand this move, which was a pity, as it is not at all a bad provocation, to which I succumbed.



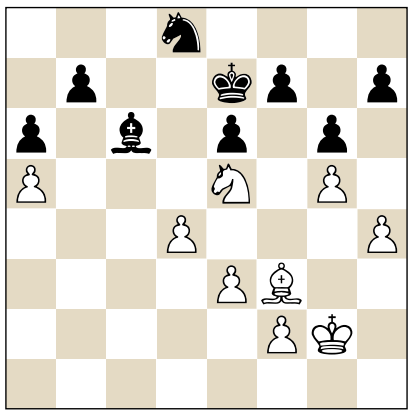
28.♘d5?! 28.♔f1! was called for. It was never too late to take the king to the queenside, exploiting the fact that it is blockaded!
28...♗g5 29.♘b6 e6 30.♘c4
This is a rather critical moment. Here Black missed a good opportunity to try and activate his game.



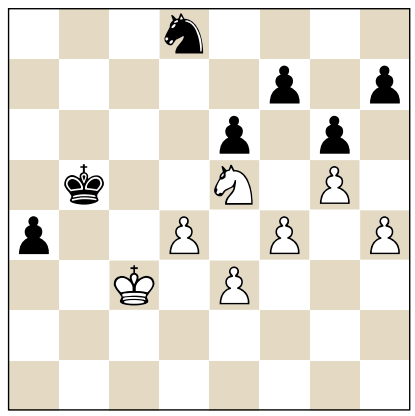
30...♗d7
An interesting attempt was 30...♘b4!? and now after 31.♗xb7 ♗xa4 32.♗a5 ♗e7! 33.♗xb4 ♗xb4 34.♗xa6 I think that Black should be able to hold this endgame – the opposite-colour bishops are close!
31.a5 ♗e7 32.g4
It is now time to open a second front. The plan of transferring the king to the queenside is too late – I missed a favourable moment to carry it out.
32...♔f8 33.♔g2



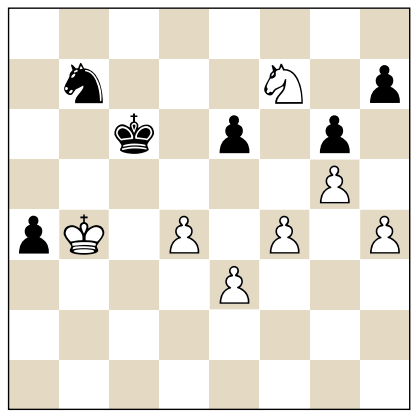
33...♗d8!?
I am not fully sure about the objective evaluation of this move. Of course, strategically I don't like it, but perhaps Black could have saved himself in a concrete way.
34.♗xd8 ♘xd8 35.♘e5 ♔e7 36.g5
I was proud of this move, and after finding it at the board I had practically no doubts about winning. In fact, there is no possibility of fixing the black pieces on the back ranks, and the manoeuvre ...♔d6-c7 and ...b6 is on the agenda.
36...♗c6 After 36...♔d6! followed by the bishop retreat to e8 and next ...♔c7 and ...b6, equality is close. For example, here to maintain White's initiative the computer advises transferring the king to the queenside with 37.♔f1!.
37.h4 And again the same situation: I seriously underestimated the possibility of counterplay with ...b6. Here my opponent lost the game by his own hands, by giving me the required number of tempi.



37...♗xf3+?
Why not 37...♔d6! 38.♔g3 (38.e4? ♔c7 looks preferable for Black) 38...♗xf3 39.♔xf3 ♘c6! 40.♘c4+ ♔d5 41.♘b6+ ♔d6, when the game would have ended in a draw.
38.♔xf3 ♔d6 39.♔e4 ♔c7 40.f4 b6 41.axb6+ ♔xb6 42.♔d3 ♔b5 43.♔c3 a5 44.♔b3 a4+ 45.♔c3



The last critical moment in the game. Of course, in no way is this zugzwang. Black needs to hit on the correct moves and create counterplay against White's rather compromised pawn structure.
45...♘b7?? Correct was 45...♘c6! 46.♘xf7 a3 47.♔b3 ♘e7 48.♔xa3 ♔c4! and Black succeeds in attacking all White's weak pawns and draws.
46.♘xf7 ♔c6??
This loses on the spot. I think that my opponent was simply very tired. It is very difficult to conduct a lengthy and painstaking defence at such a young age.
47.♔b4



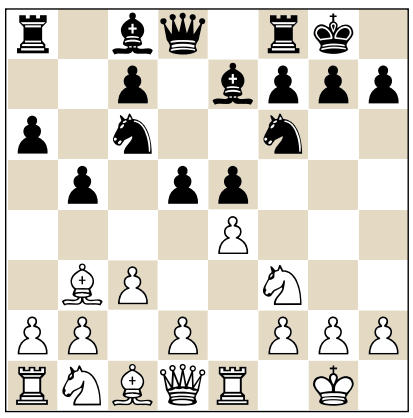
47...♔d5 48.♔xa4 ♔c4 49.♘e5+ ♔d5 50.♘d7 ♔c4 51.♘f8 ♔d3 52.♘xe6 ♔xe3 53.♔b5 ♘d6+ 54.♔c6
Black resigned. In this way I gained my most memorable win in St. Louis! ■

Sadler on Books

Great gambits and brilliant concepts

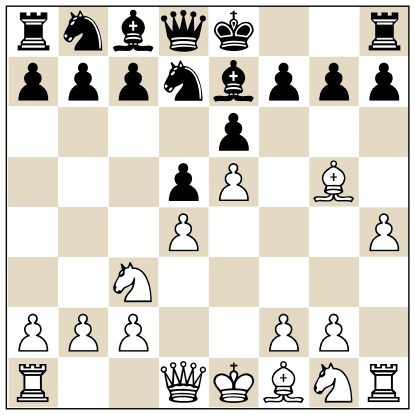
When I picked up *Key Concepts of Gambit Play* by Yuri Razuvaev (Quality Chess), I wasn't sure at all what to expect from the title. Even the front cover – a White pawn with a noose around its 'neck' – felt enigmatic... We want to do that to the king, right? As the Publisher's Foreword explains, this book was published in Russia in 2004, but never translated until now. Twelve years is a very long time in opening theory in the computer age – especially for gambits! – so a refresh of the material was necessary. Unfortunately, Razuvaev passed away in 2012 at the age of 66 so Jacob Aagaard has taken on the task of updating the book for 2017.

What is the book about? Razuvaev takes 14 different gambits, most of them fairly well-known, such as the Marshall Attack (1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 a6 4.♗a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗e7 6.♖e1 b5 7.♗b3 0-0 8.c3 d5)



and the Alekhine-Chatard Attack (1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.♗g5 ♗e7 5.e5 ♘fd7 6.h4),

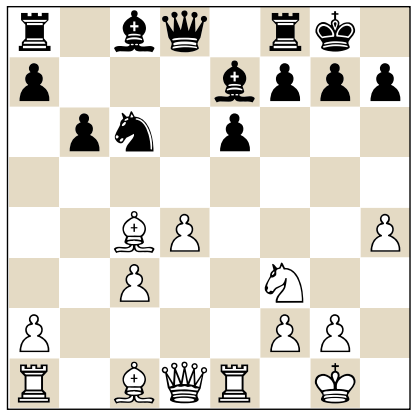
One definite advantage of reviewing books, as **MATTHEW SADLER** discovers time and again, is that you come across so many wonderful ideas and games.



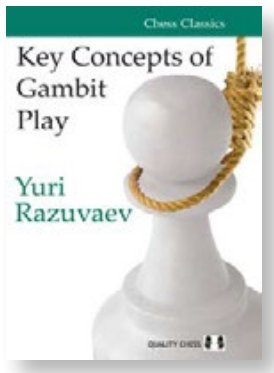
and discusses them, mixing historical background, personal observations from his vast coaching experience and concrete analysis. At the end of each chapter, Aagaard has written a 'Recent Developments' appendix featuring recent examples from the variations Razuvaev examines.

I'm always a little apprehensive about updates of classic works. For example, despite all the hard work that the author had obviously put into it, I wasn't too happy with Karsten Müller's update of Rudolf Spielmann's classic *The Art of Sacrifice in Chess* (Russell Enterprises). Firstly, the many corrections to Spielmann's analyses in the middle of Spielmann's text undermined the flow of Spielmann's prose and most of the confidence you might have had in Spielmann's ideas! Secondly, the additional chapters, though interesting in themselves, had a completely different tone and style to Spielmann's chapters, which gave a disjointed feel to the whole book. I think though that Aagaard has done a fine job here. The key point is in the Publisher's Foreword where Aagaard states that in his appendices, 'the inspirational angle was the strongest, as in Razuvaev's original text'. I think that shows how well Aagaard has understood Razuvaev's approach: this comment catches the tone of the whole book perfectly. This isn't a book that will teach you a complete opening system – I think most players would only be able to apply 10-15% of the material directly in their opening play – but it is a book that brings an enormous smile to your face and fires your imagination with sacrifices both old and new!

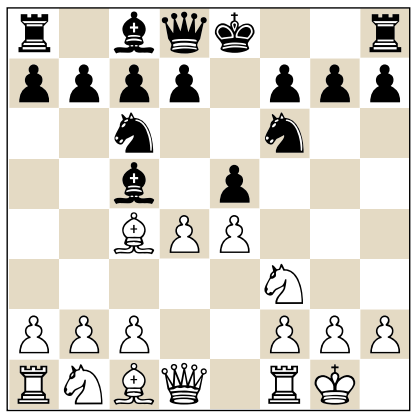
Two sections appealed to me most of all. Firstly, a chapter on one of Razuvaev's major contributions to opening theory (in a chapter entitled 'My Own Gambit') which he discovered around 1963 when he was just 18!: 1.d4 d5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.c4 e6 4.♘c3 c5 5.cxd5 ♘xd5 6.e3 ♘c6 7.♗c4 cxd4 8.exd4 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♖e1 ♘xc3 11.bxc3 b6 and now the sharp thrust 12.h4!.



Key Concepts of Gambit Play
by Yury Razuvaev
Quality Chess, 2016
★★★★☆

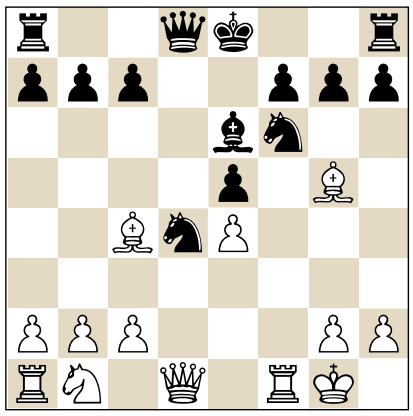


It's wonderful to hear the creator of a system explain its genesis and the trials and tribulations that accompanied the first steps into the unknown! Secondly, there's a lovely walk through Estrin's amazing gambit which is reached after either 1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.d4 or 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d4.

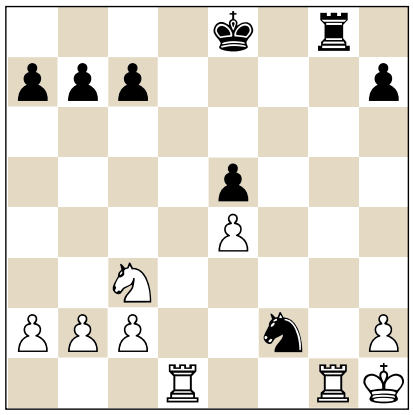


So many things surprised me about this chapter. First of all, take a look at Howard Staunton in 1841, reacting as Black to this dangerous gambit. His first attempt against Cochrane in this line was rather poor, but the power of 19th century preparation came through at the second attempt:

John Cochrane
Howard Staunton
London 1841
1.e4 e5 2.♗c4 ♗c5 3.d4 ♗xd4 4.♘f3 ♘c6 His first attempt had been 4...♕f6. Looking at this Steinitzian move, you feel that Steinitz maybe picked up on some of the worst habits of his predecessors! Play continued: 5.0-0 ♗b6 6.♘c3 c6 7.♗g5 ♕g6 8.♘xe5 ♕xg5 9.♘xf7 ♕c5 10.♗b3 d5 11.♘xh8 ♘f6 12.exd5 cxd5 13.♘xd5 ♘bd7 14.♕e2+ ♔f8 15.♖ae1 a6 16.♘xf6 ♘xf6 17.♘f7 ♗d7 18.♘g5 ♖e8 19.♕xe8+ ♘xe8 20.♘xh7 mate, Cochrane-Staunton, London 1841. **5.0-0 ♘f6 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.f4 d6 8.fxe5 dxe5 9.♗g5 ♗e6**



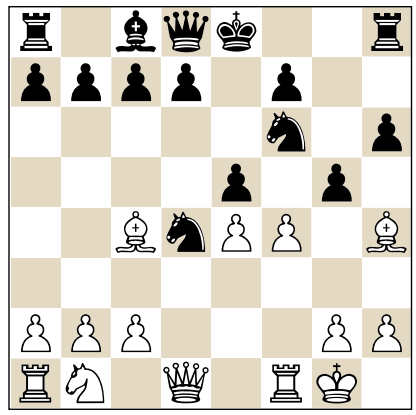
A calm, modern approach to the situation: don't try and hang on to all your advantages, but neutralise the opponent's initiative through exchanges. **10.♗xe6 ♘xe6 11.♕xd8+ ♖xd8 12.♗xf6 gxf6 13.♖xf6 ♘f4** And here early 19th century ineptitude in queenless positions kicks in from White! **14.♘c3 ♖d2 15.♖d1 ♖xg2+ 16.♔h1 ♖hg8 17.♖f5 f6 18.♖xf6 ♘h3 19.♖ff1 ♖g1+ 20.♖xg1 ♘f2**



Mate. Classy play from Staunton.

And how about this miniature from 1899? I'd be pleased with myself to find 9.f4 from scratch!

Adolf Rosentreter
Leopold Hoffer
Berlin 1899
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d4 ♗xd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.♗g5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.f4 A gorgeous stroke! They knew how to attack in the 19th century!



9...gxf4 10.♖xf4 exf4 11.♕xd4 0-0 12.♗xf6 ♕e8 13.♗h8 1-0.

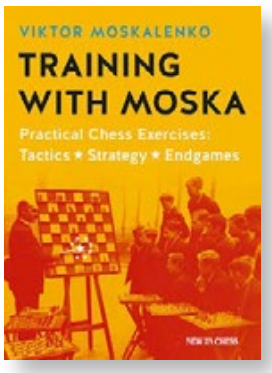
Amusingly, Razuvaev also presents lots of examples from his experience in coaching. So many young players go completely off the rails when meeting this gambit for the first time. Future GM Skembris lost a game in 8 moves in the Greek Under-18 Championship, while this is another typical example of what can happen:

Adam Ciesla
Pawel Bloch
Poland U18 2001
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗c5 4.0-0 ♘f6 5.d4 ♗xd4 6.♘xd4 ♘xd4 7.f4 ♘c6 8.♗xf7+ ♔xf7 9.fxe5 ♖f8 10.exf6 gxf6 11.♗h6 ♖g8 12.♘c3 ♖g6 13.♕h5 ♔g8 14.♘d5 1-0.

All in all, a lovely entertaining read with much to wonder at, and much to enjoy!

I will confess that *Training with Moska* by Viktor Moskalenko (New In Chess) did not fill me with joy when I opened my parcel of new books. A big thick book of 350 pages, filled with exercises. I always try and review books responsibly, which means I feel duty-bound to try a good percentage of the problems set, but it all takes so much time... However, the same weekend I talked to the father of a keen junior chess player,

Training with Moska by Viktor Moskalenko New In Chess, 2016
★★★☆☆



and he was very enthusiastic about this book. 'Lots of good examples, all organised and sorted for you! What more could you want?' Putting aside my laziness, I decided to use this book as training for my coming 4NCL weekend. And indeed, like all Moskalenko's books, it's a good read,

'Like all Moskalenko's books, it's a good read, entertaining and full of off-topic incidental nuggets about openings!'

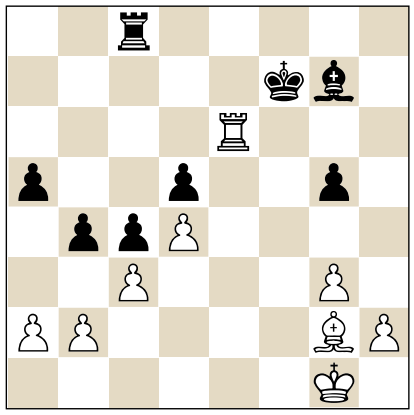
entertaining and full of off-topic incidental nuggets about openings! The book is divided up into 3 sections: Tactics, Strategy and Endings. An initial section introduces each topic – the Tactics section is about 30 pages and Strategy and Endings are both about 90 pages – with regular exercises to keep you awake. Each section is rounded off with an exam of about 50 positions.

I would classify this book more as instruction through inspiration rather than through a structured teaching method. In the Strategy section, Moskalenko embraces Steinitz' principles and throughout the chapter he offers the reader a number of lists of factors to consider which he then treats through examples. It may just be me – maybe I just read the book too quickly – but I consistently lost track of where I was in the Steinitz hierarchy! That's partly because the examples Moskalenko chose are so interesting, almost always with unusual tactical points. At the end of a chapter, I felt happy and inspired by so many interesting positions, but I felt just as far from Steinitz as before I'd read Moskalenko's book! Something similar applies to the Endgame chapter: great material, but I wasn't sure whether I'd really learnt anything structured by the end of it. I also think that you could best do the Strategy exam with someone setting you the puzzles. Moskalenko often uses several positions from the same game in the exam. Once you realise that, it's not hard to cheat and look at the next position to see what you should play in the current one!

In conclusion, recommended as a good book but not quite the teaching course I'd expected it to be.

I'll just round off with one gorgeous little example from the Tactics section. A lovely demonstration of an intermediate move!

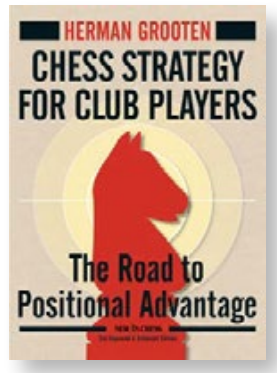
Lucas Cisneros
Viktor Moskalenko
Banyoles 2000



29...♗xd4+ As 29...♔xe6 30.♗h3+ ♔d6 31.♗xc8 ♗xd4+ 32.cxd4 c3 33.bxc3 bxc3 is met by 34.♗f5 stopping the advance of the c-pawn. Enter the intermediate move! **30.♔f1!** After 30.cxd4 ♔xe6 31.♗h3+ ♔f6, the bishop is already out of the way, so Black can cover the f5-square with his king!: 32.♗xc8 c3 33.bxc3 bxc3 and the c-pawn queens. **30...♔xe6 31.♗h3+ ♔d6 32.♗xc8 bxc3 33.bxc3 ♗xc3 34.h4 gxh4 35.gxh4 ♗g7 36.♔e2 d4 37.♔f3 ♔d5 38.♗b7+ ♔c5 39.♔e4 ♔b4 40.h5 d3 41.♔e3 ♗h6+ 42.♔d4 ♗g7+ 43.♔e3 a4 44.♗c6 a3 45.♗d7 ♔c3 46.♗b5 ♗h6+ 47.♔e4 d2 48.♗a4 ♔b2 49.♔d4 c3 50.♔d3 ♗g7** 0-1.

■ ■ ■

Chess Strategy for Club Players by Herman Grooten New In Chess, 2017
★★★★☆



Chess Strategy for Club Players by Herman Grooten (New In Chess) is another book with Steinitz' principles at its core, but it's a very different book indeed. The thing that strikes you most – certainly after just reading Moskalenko's book – is the time and space that Grooten takes to explain important concepts. Whereas Moskalenko pokes you continually with an interesting tactic here, and an opening idea there, Grooten keeps the focus on the concept he wants to get across and patiently and logically takes you along to the conclusion he wants to reach. In 450 pages and 25 chapters, Grooten takes the reader through simple yet essential strategical concepts such as 'The bishop pair', 'A piece out of play', 'The open file' with regular exercises to test your understanding and a final exam at the end. It's an excellent book and one that all club players will benefit from enormously.

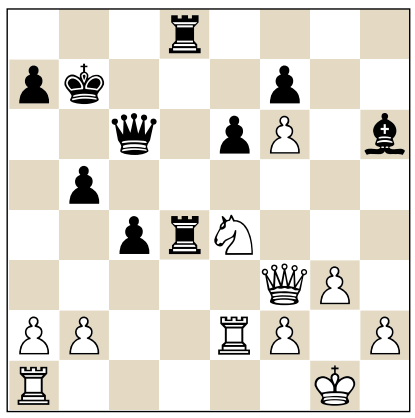
The only thing I resisted was the third chapter – 'Thought process and line of thinking' – which details a certain method and framework for thinking about positions. My own very personal view – everyone should decide this for themselves – is that while I'm in favour of such a structured approach during home analysis (when it can be particularly important

to dissect a position thoroughly and scientifically) I'm very suspicious of an overly structured thinking process during practical play. From that point of view, I much more want to think like Moskalenko's book during a game – with a (hyper)active mind, constantly bringing in new inputs and related ideas – than like Grooten's book, which strikes me as a little cautious and restricted. However, the proof of any trainer is his pupils and Grooten certainly has had some good ones, so I'll leave you to make up your own mind about this!

Speaking of his pupils, in that same chapter on 'Thought process and line of thinking', Grooten presents a game which Jan Werle (a Grooten pupil who became a strong Grandmaster) won against another strong Dutch Grandmaster, Erwin l'Ami. It features a phenomenal opening concept and the whole game is wonderfully played. It certainly deserves its moment in the spotlights.

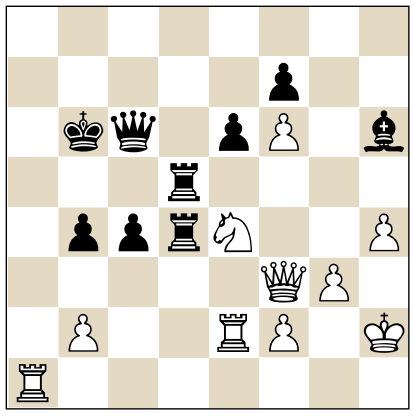
Jan Werle
Erwin l'Ami
Leeuwarden 2005

1.♘f3 d5 2.d4 c6 3.c4 ♘f6 4.♘c3 e6 5.♗g5 dxc4 6.e4 b5 7.e5 h6 8.♗h4 g5 9.♘xg5 hxg5 10.♗xg5 ♘bd7 11.g3 ♗b7 12.♗g2 ♕b6 13.exf6 0-0-0 14.0-0 ♗h6 15.♗e3 c5 16.dxc5 ♘xc5 17.♗xc5 ♕xc5 18.♗xb7+ ♔xb7 19.♕f3+ ♕c6 20.♘e4 ♖d4 21.♖fe1 ♖hd8 22.♖e2



As Grooten points out, a blitz game Ivanchuk-Piket in 1999 had gone 22.h4 ♖8d5 23.♖e2 a5 24.♖ae1 b4 25.♔h2 ♔b6 26.♕g4, when 26...c3 would have been fine for Black. Quite a few of the raw ingredients for a good White plan are in there, but it takes something special to come up with the right recipe!

22...♖8d5 23.a3 a5 24.h4 b4 25.axb4 axb4 26.♔h2 ♔b6

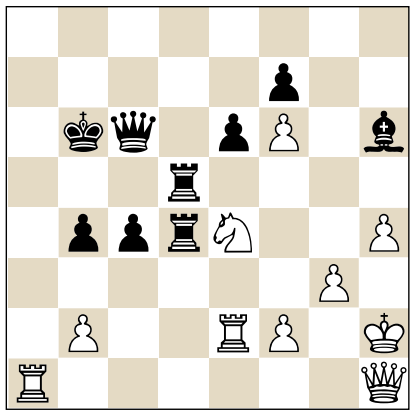


The game is almost identical to Ivanchuk-Piket, with just the difference

'There is no obvious way that White can exploit this. That is true, but there is a non-obvious way!'

that White has left his rook on the a-file. This looks very logical – after all Black has had to allow the opening of the a-file in order to activate his queenside pawn majority – but there is no obvious way that White can exploit this. That is true, but there is a non-obvious way!

27.♕h1!

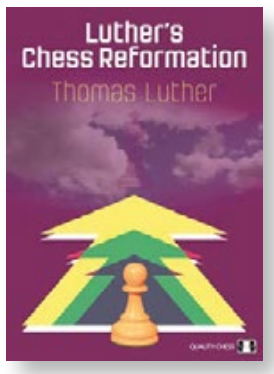


Wow! Wow! Wow! What a concept! h4, ♔h2 and ♕h1 aiming to activate the queen on the freshly opened a-file via b1-a2!! Brilliant!

27...♖a5 28.♖xa5 ♔xa5 29.f3 ♔b5 30.♕a1 ♕a6 31.♕g1 ♕b6 32.♔g2 ♖d3 The ending is probably losing but against Black's best 32...♕d8, Werle had intended the very nice 33.♖e1, bringing the second rook on to the a-file. Fantastic play! **33.♕xb6+ ♔xb6 34.g4 ♗f4 35.g5 c3 36.bxc3 bxc3 37.♖c2 ♗d2 38.♔f2 ♔b5 39.h5** 1-0.

■ ■ ■

Luther's Chess Reformation
by Thomas Luther
Quality Chess, 2016
★★★☆☆



Luther's Chess Reformation by Thomas Luther (Quality Chess) is a reflection by the German GM Thomas Luther on his career until now, taking in his career as a professional player (he is a three-time German Champion who was rated over 2600 at his peak), his first steps as a trainer and his recent occupations as a FIDE official and FIDE Senior Trainer. Thinking about the book, I have the feeling that every prospective trainer should read it. There are many insights and topics that don't often get discussed in a chess book. For example, Thomas talks candidly about the additional challenges that his disability (he was born with shortened arms and stunted fingers) posed, as well as the question that every ambitious youngster must answer: should I turn professional or not? I also greatly enjoyed all the insights about the French Defence which Thomas uses to illustrate a number of training methods. All in all, a good read! ■

Jan Timman

Going back and forth in time

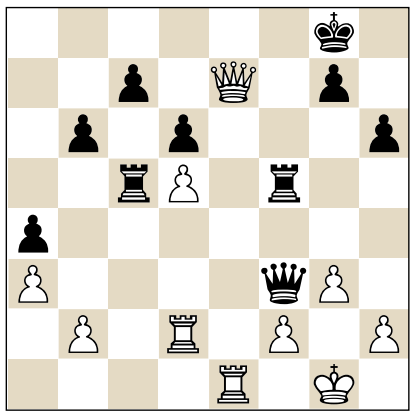
For years now, a great many chess games have been played on the Internet worldwide – rapid, blitz, bullet, you name it. Mostly these are 'free' games, but increasingly players take part in online competitions. Besides many individual competitions, team competitions have sprung up as well. One of the best-known team events was the American Chess League, an online inter-city competition. Last year, it was decided to extend the competition, which led to the Pro Chess league of *chess.com*, an event contested by 48 cities spread over the entire world.

The time-control was 15 minutes, with two-second increments. Each team had four players, and after a qualification tournament the winner would be decided in a knock-out round. Because the matches were played in the weekends, the Pro Chess League lasted over three months. The teams sported colourful names, although I don't know how happy I would have been having to play against the San Jose Hackers. In the far North, you had the Reykjavik Puffins, and on the other side of the world, the Patagonia Penguins. Other names that struck me were the Johannesburg Koeksisters, the Hamburg Swashbucklers and the Marseille Migraines, the most pessimistic name of all.

But it was a serious competition nevertheless, in which half the world's Top-10 took part: Carlsen, So, Caruana, Vachier-Lagrave and Nakamura. Given their recent rivalry for chess supremacy, it was interesting to check how Carlsen and So performed. Both of them got a very high score. So was the Most Valuable Player with a tremendous score of 36½ from 41. Carlsen had the second best personal score, amassing 31 points from 36 games.

As he went over games from the Pro Chess League, **JAN TIMMAN** was reminded of an endgame he had in 1976.

It so happened that their teams, the Norway Gnomes and the St Louis Arch Bishops, met each other in the final. The Bishops won, but the World Champion had the satisfaction of beating his rival.

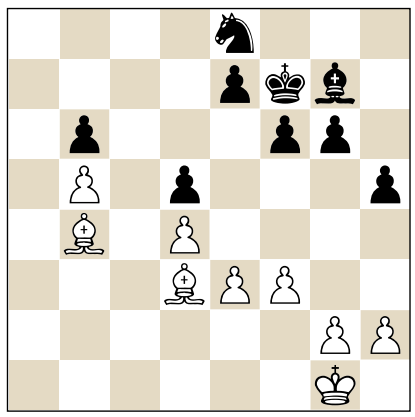


So-Carlsen
Pro Chess League 2017
position after 26...♖f5

Black clearly has the initiative, but White needn't despair. With 27.♕e8+ ♔h7 28.♕e4 he could have gone for a quite tenable rook ending.

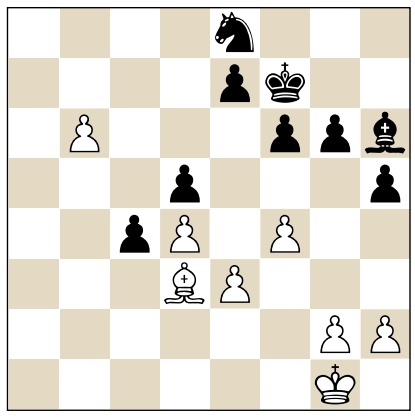
Instead, he played: **27.♖e3?** 'A mini-blunder,' So called it later. **27...♖c1+ 28.♖e1 ♖xe1+ 29.♕xe1 ♖e5** Very accurate. Black keeps his queen in its dominant position, and White remains tied hand and foot. **30.♕c1 b5** And Carlsen managed to win this endgame in an instructive manner: **31.h3 ♔f8 32.h4 ♔e8 33.♔h2 ♔d8 34.♕h1 ♕b3 35.♕g2 ♖e1 36.♕h3 ♕f3 37.♕g2 ♕f5 38.♕h3 ♖h1+** White resigned.

Wesley So did beat Caruana and Vachier-Lagrave. Against the latter he uncorked a nice breakthrough combination:



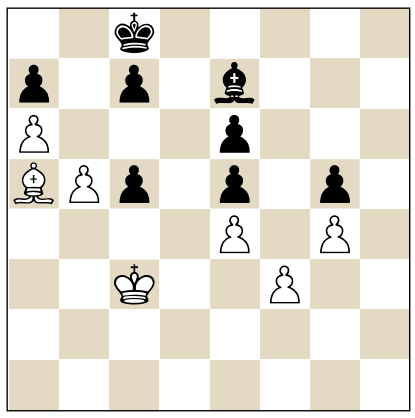
So-Vachier-Lagrave
Pro Chess League 2017
position after 27...axb6

White is obviously better, but will he be able to break through the black defences?
28.♗c5! An elegant sacrifice with a special additional point. **28...bxc5 29.b6 ♗h6 30.f4 c4!** The best defence. After 30...♘d6 31.dxc5 the white passed pawns would decide.



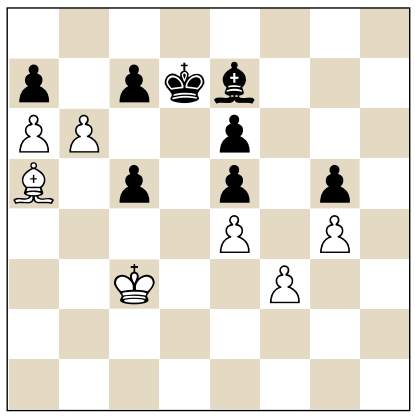
31.♗xg6+! This second bishop sacrifice is very subtle. After 31.b7 cxd3 32.b8♕ d2 33.♕b3 ♘d6 34.♕xd5+ ♔g7 35.♕b3 ♘c4 36.♕d3 ♘xe3 37.♕xd2 ♗xf4 Black would succeed in building a fortress.
31...♔xg6 32.b7 Now White will win easily. **32...f5 33.b8♕ ♘f6 34.♕c8 ♗g7 35.h3 h4 36.♔f1** Black resigned.

Here is another breakthrough combination by So, again on the queenside.

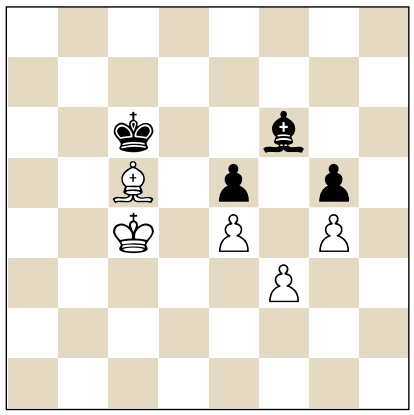


So-Chirila
Pro Chess League 2017
position after 46.♔c3

It goes without saying that White will try to win the endgame, but the problem is that he won't achieve anything with a capture on c5; the pawn ending is drawn.
46...♔d7
A careless move that gives White chances. After any bishop move White would have been stuck.
47.b6!



Of course. Now White is getting winning chances after all.
47...cxb6 48.♗xb6 ♔c6 49.♗xa7 ♔b5 50.♗b8 ♔xa6 51.♔c4 ♔b7 52.♗xe5 ♔c6 53.♗g3 ♗f6 54.♗f2 ♗e7 55.♗e3 e5 56.♗d2 ♗d8 57.♗e1
White's winning chances still aren't realistic, but he does have good reason to play on. Black is forced to continue to make accurate bishop moves.
57...♗f6 The wrong square. After 57...♗e7 58.♗d2 ♗d8! 59.♗e3 ♗e7 White would be unable to make progress. Black will keep his pawns.
58.♗f2! Eventually winning a pawn.
58...♗e7 59.♗e3
The same position with Black to move. A situation of reciprocal zugzwang has arisen.
59...♗f6 60.♗xc5



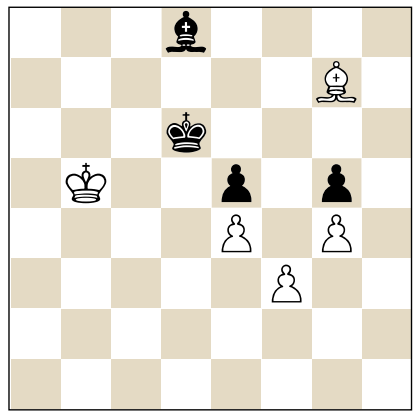
60...♗d8 61.♗b4 The route to the win was 61.♗f2 ♗e7 62.♗e3, with zugzwang. The white king penetrates via the a-file.

'I don't know how happy I would have been having to play against the San Jose Hackers.'

61...♗f6 62.♗f8 ♗d8 63.♗g7
The start of an erroneous plan.
63...♔d6 64.♔b5?
The white king can still penetrate, but now his bishop could have been cut off. It should have retraced its steps with 64.♗f8+.

NEW IN CHESS

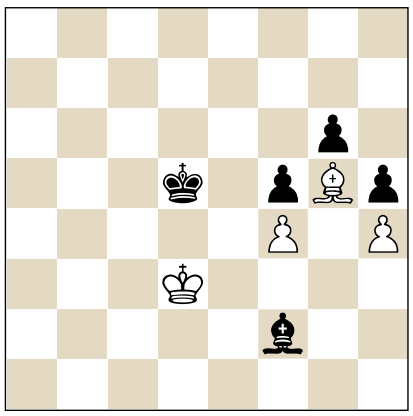
Wesley So was the Most Valuable Player in the ProChess League with a tremendous score of 36½ from 41.



64...♔e6? With 64...♗e7 Black could have cut off the bishop, scuppering White's winning chances.
65.♗f8! Now everything proceeds swimmingly.
65...♔f7 66.♗c5 ♔e6 67.♔c6 ♗a5 68.♗e3 ♗d8 69.♗b6 ♗e7 70.♗c5 ♗d8 71.♗e3 ♗e7 72.♔c7 ♗f6 73.♗c5
Black resigned.

The position from So-Chirila after 60.♗xc5 gave me a déjà-vu experience: 41 years ago, I had a virtually identical endgame, with reversed colours, against Heikki Westerinen, the only difference being that the pawn structure was moved one file

to the right. This has no bearing on the assessment. My game against Westerinen was played in the final round of the Haifa Olympiad, and I had to win. The Warsaw Pact countries were absent for political reasons, and the fight for gold was between the US and the Netherlands. In the end, my king managed to penetrate the enemy position via the back rank, but my win unfortunately only yielded me the gold medal for Board 1. The US won the Olympiad with a minimal difference.
Later, Dvoretsky tried to demonstrate that Westerinen could have held the position. For years, it never occurred to me to doubt his conclusions, as Dvoretsky is known as an endgame expert. But while I was analysing So-Chirila, I felt doubts creeping in: could Westerinen really have drawn? I will look at it briefly.



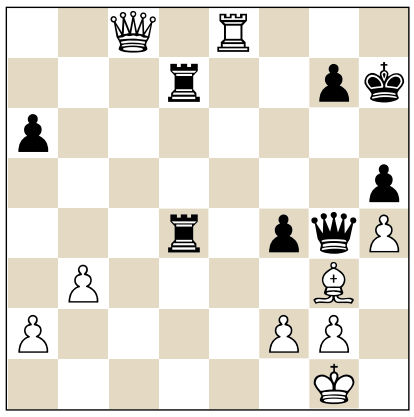
Westerinen-Timman
Haifa 1976
position after 75...♗f2

Here, Westerinen played **76.♔e2** and after **76...♗c5 77.♔d3 ♗d6** he was in zugzwang, because the bishop could not move. He was forced to go **78.♔e3** after which Black's king penetrated via c4. Dvoretsky indicates that with 76.♗f6 or 76.♗d8 White could have drawn, the idea being to regroup: as soon as the black bishop starts attacking the white pawns from its own territory, White should also withdraw his bishop.
Dvoretsky indicates the variation 76.♗d8 ♗e1 77.♗f6 ♗a5 78.♗d4 ♗c7 79.♗e3 ♗d6 80.♗d2 ♗e7 81.♗e1 ♗f6 82.♗f2, and it looks as if White has optimized his defences.

But with accurate manoeuvring, Black can still win. His plan is to penetrate with the king via the b-file, in other words, to circle around the stuck white king. This is done as follows: 76.♗d8 ♗c5 77.♗a5 ♗d6 78.♗d2 ♗c7! 79.♗e3 ♗d8 80.♗f2 ♗f6, and White is in zugzwang. After 81.♗g3 ♔c5 82.♗e1 ♔b5 83.♗f2 ♔b4 my computer's assessment of Black's position starts to improve: it has spotted the winning plan.

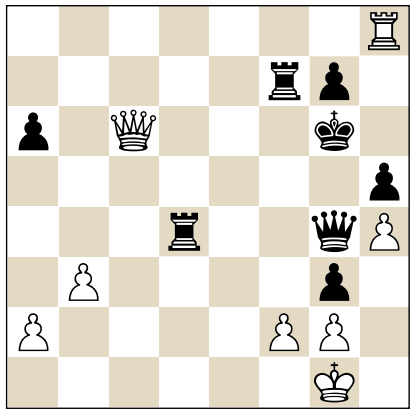
Carlsen's predecessors

A while ago, I was reminded of that Haifa Olympiad because of Carlsen's now famous final move against Karjakin in New York. In previous issues of this magazine, you saw how Carlsen's final combination had occurred in practice twice before. But there is an even older example from Haifa, except that the queen sacrifice stayed below the surface there. After 10 rounds the Dutch team was 2½ points ahead of the US (it was board points in those days), but in Round 11 they gained two points on us; we only held West-Germany to a 2-2 draw, while they steamrolled Switzerland 4-0. The following fragment is from that match.

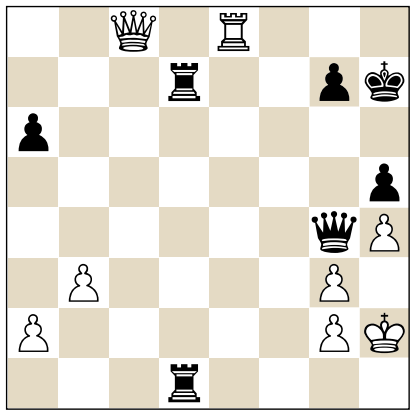


Hug-Kavalek
Haifa 1976
position after 35.♖e8

Donner wrote in *Schaakbulletin*: 'Kavalek has completely outplayed Hug and can now mate him at once. In raging mutual time-trouble he fails to spot this and plays 35...fxg3??. Now Hug gets a chance to fire his last grenade with 36.♖h8+ ♔g6 37.♕e8+ ♖f7 38.♕c6+.

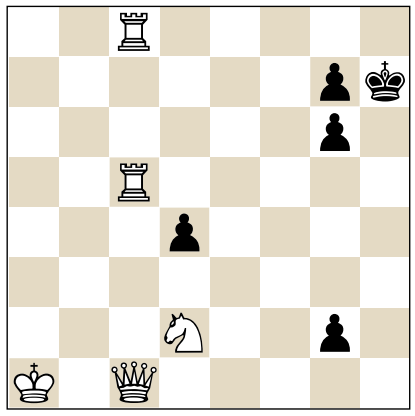


I do not see it, but both players maintained afterwards that Black could not have avoided the perpetual. (It is true that the perpetual is not so easy to spot, but the black king will be unable to escape after 38...♔f5 39.♕c5+ ♔f6 40.♕b6+! – JT.) But Hug played 36.fxg3??, and now Kavalek could force mate again. And again he didn't spot it, played 36...♕f5 and only managed to make his extra rook count in the second sitting. You really don't have to be a top grandmaster to see that in the first diagram Black can mate in five with 35...♖d1+ 36.♔h2 fxg3+ 37.fxg3



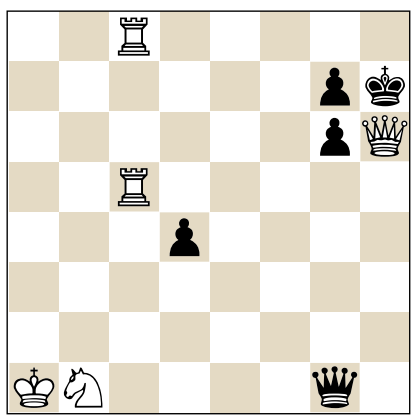
37...♕h3+!!.'
This is what it was about. I had been carrying that queen sacrifice in my head for four decades.

Someone asked me if it would be possible to compose a problem or study with this combination. I am more of a layman in the area of problems. But I still came up with an acceptable version of one – acceptable to myself, at any rate.



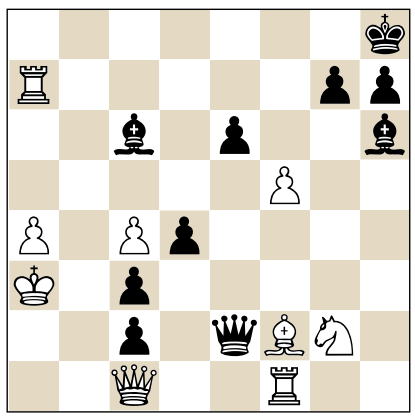
Timman 2017
Mate in 3
(First publication)

The key move is easy to find, at least if you know what it's all about.
1.♘b1! Blocking the back rank and opening the way for the white queen to h6. Insufficient was 1.♕b1 in view of 1...d3, and there is no mate in two.
1...g1♕ 2.♕h6+!



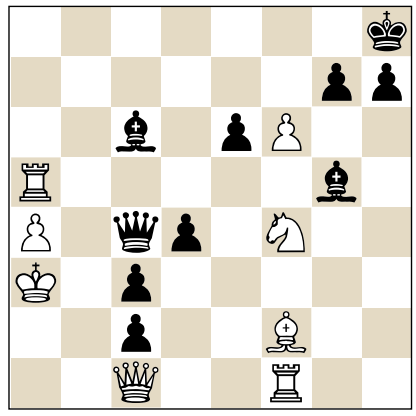
And one of the rooks will mate.

It is more difficult to make an endgame study with the combination. White needs all his major pieces for the combination, and therefore a serious numerical plus; this is no problem with a problem, but with a study it is. There is a study by the Russian composer Kalyagin from 1988. I won't give it here, because the play in the main line is anything but scintillating, and on the first move there is already a side-solution. I myself made the following attempt.

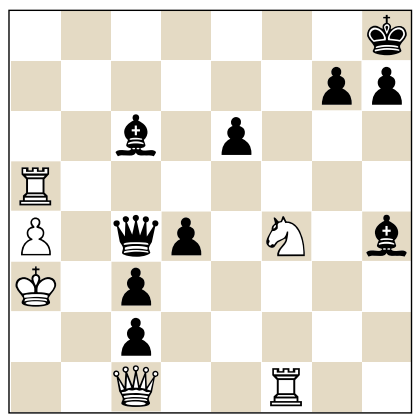


Timman 2017
White to play and win
(First publication)

1.♘f4 ♕xc4 2.♖a5! A defensive move that will eventually be important for the final combination. **2...♗g5** Black has dangerous counterplay, threatening a devastating check on e7. **3.f6!** Opening the f-file.



3...♗xf6 After 3...gxf6 4.♗h4! ♗xh4 5.♘g6+! hxg6 6.♕h6+ the white queen will hoover up the board.
4.♗h4!
The open file was still blocked. The bishop sacrifice remedies this.
4...♗xh4



5.♘g6+! Everything is becoming clear. **5...hxg6 6.♖f8+ ♔h7 7.♕h6+!** And again, one of the rooks will mate. ■

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Are you not yet a subscriber to New In Chess? Give it a try! Take out a subscription today on the premier chess magazine in the world, and receive 8 issues a year. New In Chess Digital is available for iPhone, iPad and Android.

NEW IN CHESS		EUROPE	U.S.A. Canada Mexico	REST OF WORLD
1 year (8 issues)	print or digital	€79.99	$89.99	€79.99
1 years (8 issues)	print AND digital	€99.99	$113.99	€99.99
3 years (24 issues)	print or digital	€219.99	$239.99	€219.99
3 years (24 issues)	print AND digital	€279.99	$311.99	€279.99

SUBSCRIBE DIRECTLY AT WWW.NEWINCHESS.COM

New In Chess, P.O. Box 1093, 1810 KB Alkmaar, The Netherlands.
Phone: 0031-(0)72 512 7137, nic@newinchess.com

USA and Canada only:
New In Chess c/o Land of Chess, 707 Skokie Blvd, Suite 600, Northbrook, IL 60062, Phone: 847-480-2780, nic@newinchess.com

Just Checking

Ian Nepomniachtchi

CURRENT ELO: 2751

DATE OF BIRTH: July 14, 1990

PLACE OF BIRTH: Bryansk, Russia

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Moscow, Russia

What is your favourite city?
Moscow.

What was the last great meal you had?
Can't recall, but I guess great company makes any food pretty good. ☺

What drink brings a smile to your face?
Ehmm... should it be a cool drink on a hot day?

Which book would you give to a dear friend?
Perhaps stories by Chekhov or Bunin.

What book is currently on your bedside table?
Borges.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Watchmen was great. Recently, no doubt, *Arrival*.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Let's say Butler, Fassbender, Reeves, Bale, Cumberbatch.

And a favourite actress?
Marion Cotillard is cool!

What music are you currently listening to?
Hans Zimmer.

Is there a painting that moves you?
The Demon Seated by Mikhail Vrubel.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
Alekhine and Fischer. No explanation needed, I guess.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?
Nimzowitsch, *My System*. A common answer, isn't it? ☺

What was your best result ever?
Tal Memorial 2016 for now. But, hopefully, it's still ahead!

What was the most exciting chess game you have ever seen?
Oh, well, tomorrow's game is always the most exciting.

What is your favourite square?
No idea, but let's say f5.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?
Socialization is sometimes not our strongest point, but we're good people!

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
All our talents are simply unquantifiable!

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?
We all have!

How many friends do you have on Facebook?
499, so you can become a jubilee!

Who do you follow on Twitter?
Friends, musicians, athletes, etc.

What is your life motto?
Gotta think about it asap!

What was the happiest time of your life?
I suppose my childhood, but as they say, tomorrow will be better than yesterday.

When was the last time you cried?
At the cinema. Well, you know, these tearful moments...

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
A man with a creative profession, maybe a writer.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
I'd invite my best friends.

What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?
To truly understand any advice, you should pay your dues first.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
Diligence and patience.

What is your greatest fear?
Loneliness hurts.

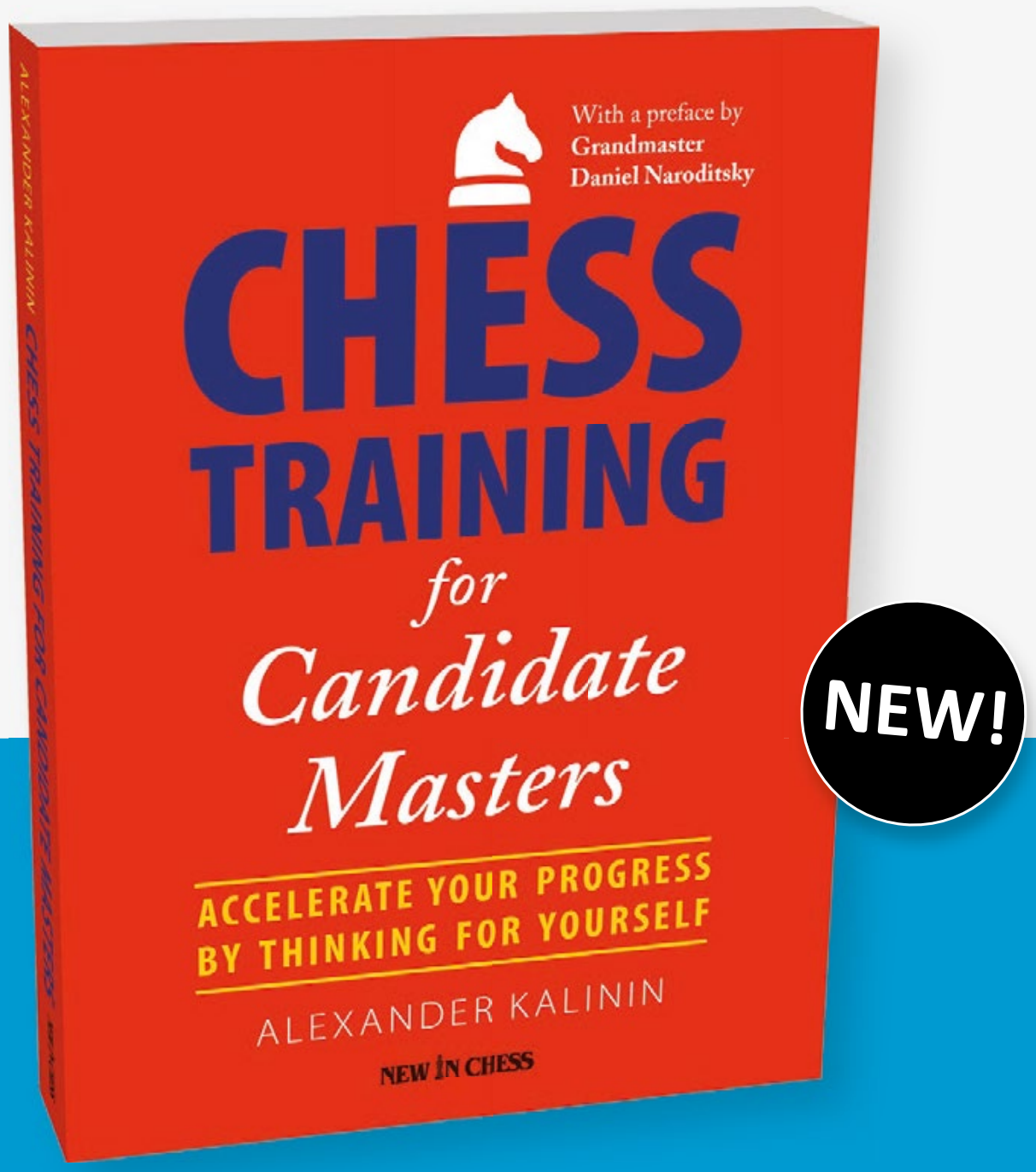
And your greatest regret?
My laziness is often stronger than me.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
It would be interesting to remove all ratings!

What does it mean to be a chess player?
To sacrifice yourself to the Game without restraint.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?
Bobby Fischer had a lot of good ones, for example: 'That's what Chess is all about. One day you give your opponent a lesson, the next day he gives you one.'

Do you want to be a Master?



"Sasha Kalinin has an acute understanding of what modern chess players struggle with and what they must do in order to improve."

GM Daniel Naroditsky

(who was coached by Kalinin to win the World Youth Championship)

paperback | 208 pages | €18.95 | available at your local (chess)bookseller or at newinchess.com | a NEW IN CHESS publication

Chess at ICC

The best online chess experience there is.
Clean, brilliant & smart. *iOS and Android*

Chess Videos
Every Russian Schoolboy Knows: Easy Come Easy Go - A story of Modern Opening Preparation - part 4
Improve Your Chess: Tactical R&P Endgame
World Championship Match - Game 10
World Championship Match - Game 9
Attack with LarryC: Back to the Future!
Seek Graph
02:36
02:35
GM Alex Yermolinsky

Download on the App Store

ICC
chessclub.com